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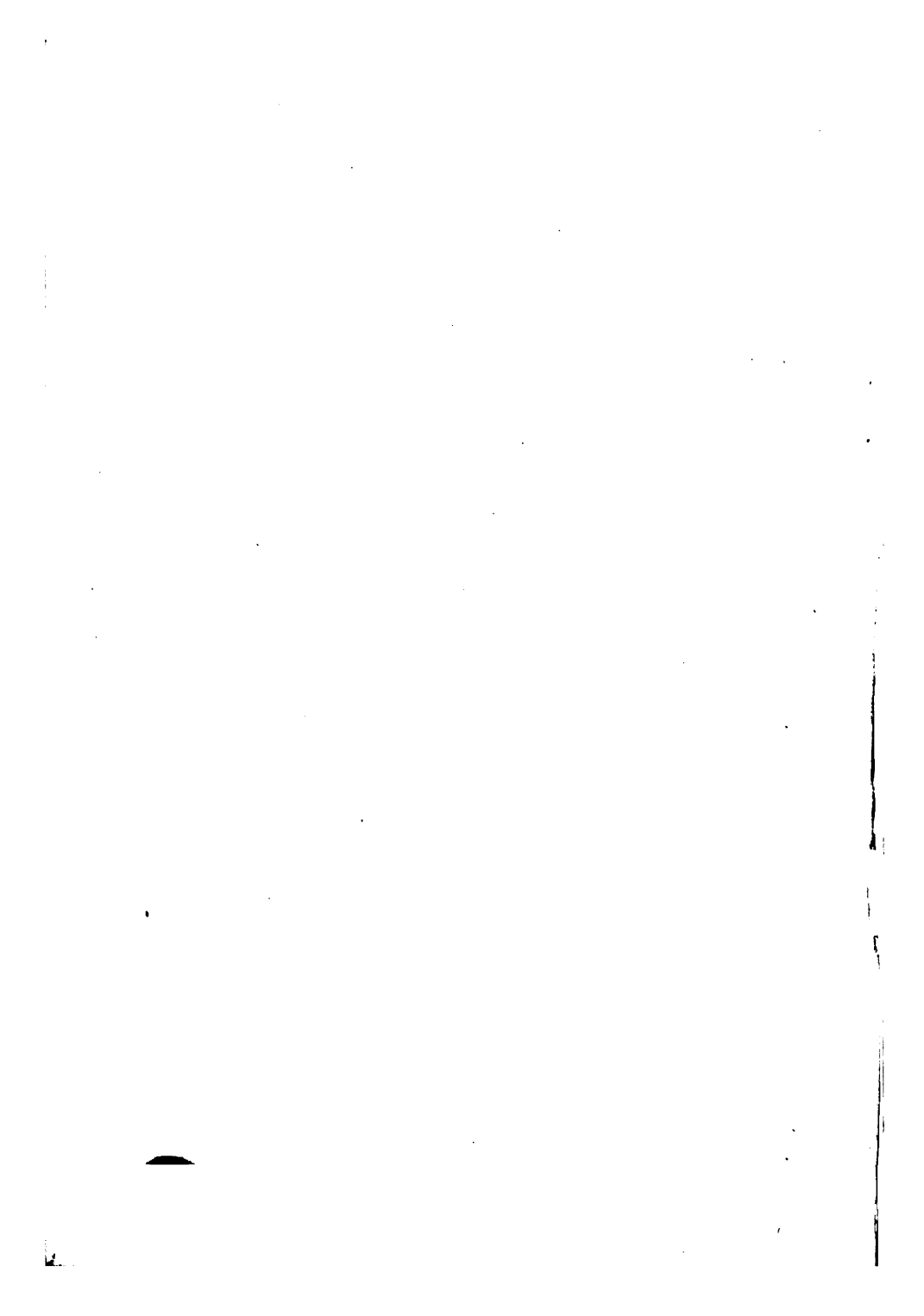
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# THE SOUL OF THE FAR EAST



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TORONTO

THE  
SOUL OF THE FAR EAST

BY  
PERCIVAL LOWELL  
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"CHOSŌN," "A KOREAN COUP D'ÉTAT"

NEW ILLUSTRATED EDITION



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1911

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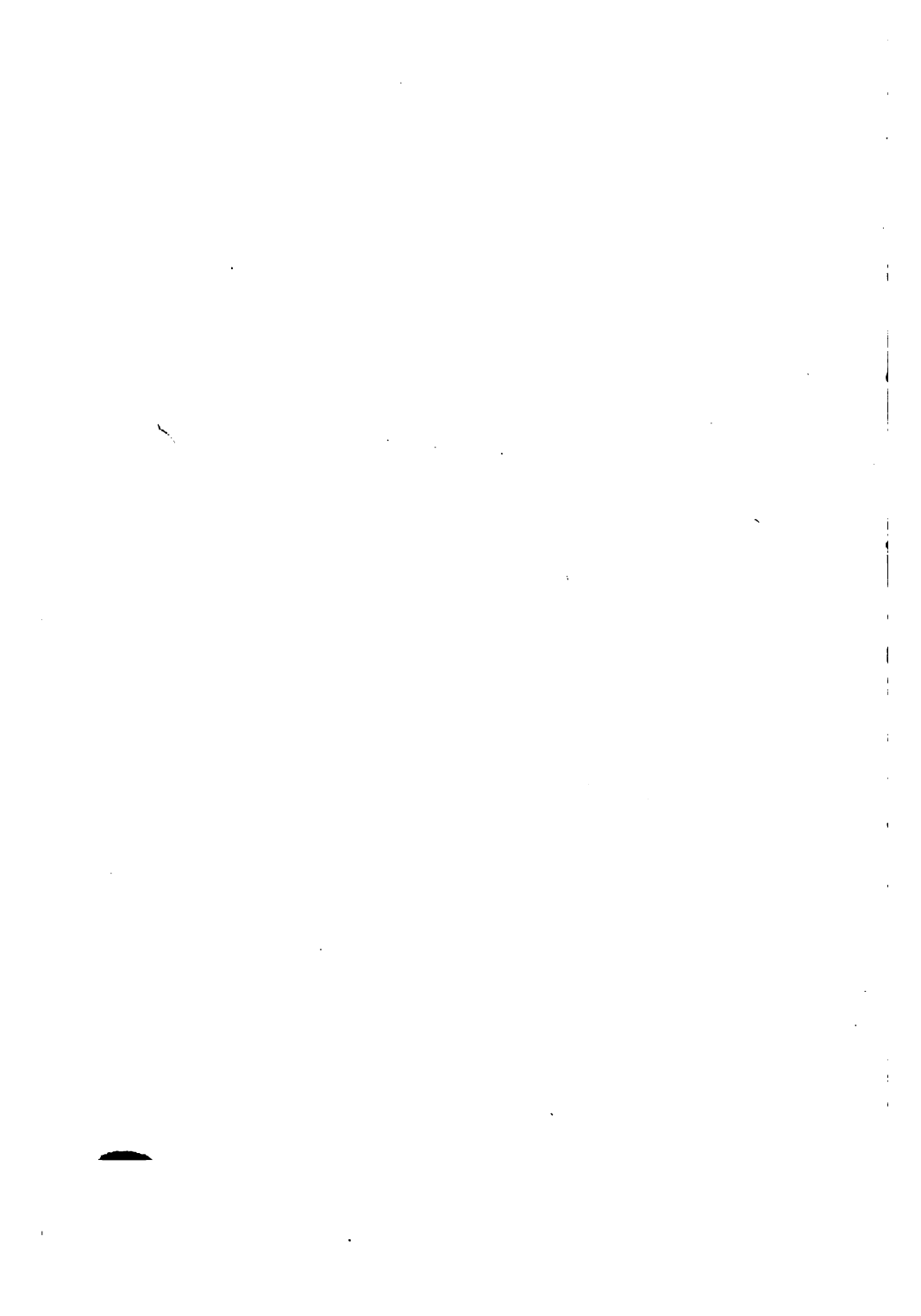
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**THE SOUL OF THE FAR EAST**



## THE SOUL OF THE FAR EAST.

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### I.

#### INDIVIDUALITY.

THE boyish belief that on the other side of our globe all things are of necessity upside down is startlingly brought back to the man when he first sets foot at Yokohama. If his initial glance does not, to be sure, disclose the natives in the every-day feat of standing calmly on their heads, an attitude which his youthful imagination conceived to be a necessary consequence of their geographical position, it does at least reveal them looking at the world as if from the standpoint of that eccentric posture. For they seem to him to see everything topsy-turvy. Whether it be that their antipodal situation has affected their brains, or whether it is the mind of the observer himself that has hitherto been wrong in undertaking to

rectify the inverted pictures presented by his retina, the result, at all events, is undeniable. The world stands reversed, and, taking for granted his own uprightness, the stranger unhesitatingly imputes to them an obliquity of vision, a state of mind outwardly typified by the cat-like obliqueness of their eyes.

If the inversion be not precisely of the kind he expected, it is none the less striking, and impressibly more real. If personal experience has definitely convinced him that the inhabitants of that under side of our planet do not adhere to it head downwards, like flies on a ceiling, — his early *a priori* deduction, — they still appear quite as antipodal, mentally considered. Intellectually, at least, their attitude sets gravity at defiance. For to the mind's eye their world is one huge, comical antithesis of our own. What we regard intuitively in one way from our standpoint, they as intuitively observe in a diametrically opposite manner from theirs. To speak backwards, write backwards, read backwards, is but the *a b c* of their contrariety. The inversion extends deeper than mere modes of expression, down into the very matter of

thought. Ideas of ours which we deemed innate find in them no home, while methods which strike us as preposterously unnatural appear to be their birthright. From the standing of a wet umbrella on its handle instead of its head to dry to the striking of a match away in place of toward one, there seems to be no action of our daily lives, however trivial, but finds with them its appropriate reaction — equal but opposite. Indeed, to one anxious of conforming to the manners and customs of the country, the only road to right lies in following unswervingly that course which his inherited instincts assure him to be wrong.

Yet these people are human beings; with all their eccentricities they are men. Physically we cannot but be cognizant of the fact, nor mentally but be conscious of it. Like us, indeed, and yet so unlike are they that we seem, as we gaze at them, to be viewing our own humanity in some mirth-provoking mirror of the mind, — a mirror that shows us our own familiar thoughts, but all turned wrong side out. Humor holds the glass, and we become the sport of our own reflections. But is it otherwise at home? Do not our personal presentments

mock each of us individually our lives long? Who but is the daily dupe of his dressing-glass, and complacently conceives himself to be a very different appearing person from what he is, forgetting that his right side has become his left, and *vice versa*? Yet who, when by chance he catches sight in like manner of the face of a friend, can keep from smiling at the caricatures which the mirror's left-for-right reversal makes of the asymmetry of that friend's features, — caricatures all the more grotesque for being utterly unsuspected by their innocent original? Perhaps, could we once see ourselves as others see us, our surprise in the case of foreign peoples might be less pronounced.

Regarding, then, the Far Oriental as a man, and not simply as a phenomenon, we discover in his peculiar point of view a new importance, — the possibility of using it stereoptically. For his mind-photograph of the world can be placed side by side with ours, and the two pictures combined will yield results beyond what either alone could possibly have afforded. Thus harmonized, they will help us to realize humanity. Indeed it is only by such a combina-



tion of two different aspects that we ever perceive substance and distinguish reality from illusion. What our two eyes make possible for material objects, the earth's two hemispheres may enable us to do for mental traits. Only the superficial never changes its expression; the appearance of the solid varies with the standpoint of the observer. In dreamland alone does everything seem plain, and there all is unsubstantial.

To say that the Japanese are not a savage tribe is of course unnecessary; to repeat the remark, anything but superfluous, on the principle that what is a matter of common notoriety is very apt to prove a matter about which uncommonly little is known. At present we go halfway in recognition of these people by bestowing upon them a demi-diploma of mental development called semi-civilization, neglecting, however, to specify in what the fractional qualification consists. If the suggestion of a second moiety, as of something directly complementary to them, were not indirectly complimentary to ourselves, the expression might pass; but, as it is, the self-praise is rather too obvious to carry conviction. For

Japan's claim to culture is not based solely upon the exports with which she supplements our art, nor upon the paper, china, and bric-a-brac with which she adorns our rooms; any more than Western science is adequately represented in Japan by our popular imports there of kerosene oil, matches, and beer. Only half civilized the Far East presumably is, but it is so rather in an absolute than a relative sense; in the sense of what might have been, not of what is. It is so as compared, not with us, but with the eventual possibilities of humanity. As yet, neither system, Western nor Eastern, is perfect enough to serve in all things as standard for the other. The light of truth has reached each hemisphere through the medium of its own mental crystallization, and this has polarized it in opposite ways, so that now the rays that are normal to the eyes of the one only produce darkness to those of the other. For the Japanese civilization in the sense of not being savagery is the equal of our own. It is not in the polish that the real difference lies; it is in the substance polished. In politeness, in delicacy, they have as a people no peers. Art has been their mistress,

though science has never been their master. Perhaps for this very reason that art, not science, has been the Muse they courted, the result has been all the more widespread. For culture there is not the attainment of the few, but the common property of the people. If the peaks of intellect rise less eminent, the plateau of general elevation stands higher. But little need be said to prove the civilization of a land where ordinary tea-house girls are models of refinement, and common coolies, when not at work, play chess for pastime.

If Japanese ways look odd at first sight, they but look more odd on closer acquaintance. In a land where, to allow one's understanding the freer play of indoor life, one begins, not by taking off his hat, but by removing his boots, he gets at the very threshold a hint that humanity is to be approached the wrong end to. When, after thus entering a house, he tries next to gain admittance to the mind of its occupant, the suspicion becomes a certainty. He discovers that this people talk, so to speak, backwards; that before he can hope to comprehend them, or make himself understood in return, he must learn to present

his thoughts arranged in inverse order from the one in which they naturally suggest themselves to his mind. His sentences must all be turned inside out. He finds himself lost in a labyrinth of language. The same seems to be true of the thoughts it embodies. The further he goes the more obscure the whole process becomes, until, after long groping about for some means of orienting himself, he lights at last upon the clue. This clue consists in "the survival of the unfittest."

In the civilization of Japan we have presented to us a most interesting case of partially arrested development; or, to speak esoterically, we find ourselves placed face to face with a singular example of a completed race-life. For though from our standpoint the evolution of these people seems suddenly to have come to an end in mid-career, looked at more intimately it shows all the signs of having fully run its course. Development ceased, not because of outward obstruction, but from purely intrinsic inability to go on. The intellectual machine was not shattered; it simply ran down. To this fact the phenomenon owes its peculiar interest. For we behold here

in the case of man the same spectacle that we see cosmically in the case of the moon, the spectacle of a world that has died of old age. No weak spot in their social organism destroyed them from within; no epidemic, in the shape of foreign hordes, fell upon them from without. For in spite of the fact that China offers the unique example of a country that has simply lived to be conquered, mentally her masters have invariably become her pupils. Having ousted her from her throne as ruler, they proceeded to sit at her feet as disciples. Thus they have rather helped than hindered her civilization.

Whatever portion of the Far East we examine we find its mental history to be the same story with variations. However unlike China, Korea, and Japan are in some respects, through the careers of all three we can trace the same life-spirit. It is the career of the river Jordan rising like any other stream from the springs among the mountains only to fall after a brief existence into the Dead Sea. For their vital force had spent itself more than a millennium ago. Already, then, their civilization had in its deeper developments attained

its stature, and has simply been perfecting itself since. We may liken it to some stunted tree, that, finding itself prevented from growth, hastes the more luxuriantly to put forth flowers and fruit. For not the final but the medial processes were skipped. In those superficial amenities with which we more particularly link our idea of civilization, these peoples continued to grow. Their refinement, if failing to reach our standard in certain respects, surpasses ours considering the bare barbaric basis upon which it rests. For it is as true of the Japanese as of the proverbial Russian, though in a more scientific sense, that if you scratch him you will find the ancestral Tartar. But it is no less true that the descendants of this rude forefather have now taken on a polish of which their own exquisite lacquer gives but a faint reflection. The surface was perfected after the substance was formed. Our word finish, with its double meaning, expresses both the process and the result.

There entered, to heighten the bizarre effect, a spirit common in minds that lack originality—the spirit of imitation. Though consequent enough upon a want of initia-



JAPANESE COURTESY

1960



tive, the results of this trait appear anything but natural to people of a more progressive past. The proverbial collar and pair of spurs look none the less odd to the stranger for being a 'mental instead of a bodily habit. Something akin to such a case of unnatural selection has there taken place. The orderly procedure of natural evolution was disastrously supplemented by man. For the fact that in the growth of their tree of knowledge the branches developed out of all proportion to the trunk is due to a practice of culture-grafting.

From before the time when they began to leave records of their actions the Japanese have been a nation of importers, not of merchandise, but of ideas. They have invariably shown the most advanced free-trade spirit in preferring to take somebody else's ready-made articles rather than to try to produce any brand-new conceptions themselves. They continue to follow the same line of life. A hearty appreciation of the things of others is still one of their most winning traits. What they took they grafted bodily upon their ancestral tree, which in consequence came to present a

most unnaturally diversified appearance. For though not unlike other nations in wishing to borrow, if their zeal in the matter was slightly excessive, they were peculiar in that they never assimilated what they took. They simply inserted it upon the already existing growth. There it remained, and throve, and blossomed, nourished by that indigenous Japanese sap, taste. But like grafts generally, the foreign boughs were not much modified by their new life-blood, nor was the tree in its turn at all affected by them. Connected with it only as separable parts of its structure, the cuttings might have been lopped off again without influencing perceptibly the condition of the foster-parent stem. The grafts in time grew to be great branches, but the trunk remained through it all the trunk of a sapling. In other words, the nation grew up to man's estate, keeping the mind of its childhood.

What is thus true of the Japanese is true likewise of the Koreans and of the Chinese. The three peoples, indeed, form so many links in one long chain of borrowing. China took from India, then Korea copied China, and lastly Japan imitated

Korea. In this simple manner they successively became possessed of a civilization which originally was not the property of any one of them. In the eagerness they all evinced in purloining what was not theirs, and in the perfect content with which they then proceeded to enjoy what they had taken, they remind us forcibly of that happy-go-lucky class in the community which prefers to live on questionable loans rather than work itself for a living. Like those same individuals, whatever interest the Far Eastern people may succeed in raising now, Nature will in the end make them pay dearly for their lack of principal.

The Far Eastern civilization resembles, in fact, more a mechanical mixture of social elements than a well differentiated chemical compound. For in spite of the great variety of ingredients thrown into its caldron of destiny, as no affinity existed between them, no combination resulted. The power to fuse was wanting. Capability to evolve anything is not one of the marked characteristics of the Far East. Indeed, the tendency to spontaneous variation, Nature's mode of making experiments, would

seem there to have been an enterprising faculty that was exhausted early. Sleepy, no doubt, from having got up betimes with the dawn, these dwellers in the far lands of the morning began to look upon their day as already well spent before they had reached its noon. They grew old young, and have remained much the same age ever since. What they were centuries ago, that at bottom they are to-day. Take away the European influence of the last twenty years, and each man might almost be his own great-grandfather. In race characteristics he is yet essentially the same. The traits that distinguished these peoples in the past have been gradually extinguishing them ever since. Of these traits, stagnating influences upon their career, perhaps the most important is the great quality of impersonality.

If we take, through the earth's temperate zone, a belt of country whose northern and southern edges are determined by certain limiting isotherms, not more than half the width of the zone apart, we shall find that we have included in a relatively small extent of surface almost all the nations of note in the world, past or present. Now

if we examine this belt, and compare the different parts of it with one another, we shall be struck by a remarkable fact. *The peoples inhabiting it grow steadily more personal as we go west.* So unmistakable is this gradation of spirit, that one is tempted to ascribe it to cosmic rather than to human causes. It is as marked as the change in color of the human complexion observable along any meridian, which ranges from black at the equator to blonde toward the pole. In like manner, the sense of self grows more intense as we follow in the wake of the setting sun, and fades steadily as we advance into the dawn. America, Europe, the Levant, India, Japan, each is less personal than the one before. We stand at the nearer end of the scale, the Far Orientals at the other. If with us the *I* seems to be of the very essence of the soul, then the soul of the Far East may be said to be Impersonality.

Curious as this characteristic is as a fact, it is even more interesting as a factor. For what it betokens of these peoples in particular may suggest much about man generally. It may mark a stride in theory, if a standstill in practice. Possibly it may

help us to some understanding of ourselves. Not that it promises much aid to vexed metaphysical questions, but as a study in sociology it may not prove so vain.

And for a thing which is always with us, its discussion may be said to be peculiarly opportune just now. For it lies at the bottom of the most pressing questions of the day. Of the two great problems that stare the Western world in the face at the present moment, both turn to it for solution. Agnosticism, the foreboding silence of those who think, socialism, communism, and nihilism, the petulant cry of those who do not, alike depend ultimately for the right to be upon the truth or the falsity of the sense of self.

For if there be no such actual thing as individuality, if the feeling we call by that name be naught but the transient illusion the Buddhists would have us believe it, any faith founded upon it as basis vanishes as does the picture in a revolving kaleidoscope, — less enduring even than the flitting phantasmagoria of a dream. If the ego be but the passing shadow of the material brain, at the disintegration of the gray matter what will become of us? Shall

we simply lapse into an indistinguishable part of the vast universe that compasses us round? At the thought we seem to stand straining our gaze, on the shore of the great sea of knowledge, only to watch the fog roll in, and hide from our view even those headlands of hope that, like beseeching hands, stretch out into the deep.

So more materially. If individuality be a delusion of the mind, what motive potent enough to excite endeavor in the breast of an ordinary mortal remains? Philosophers, indeed, might still work for the advancement of mankind, but mankind itself would not continue long to labor energetically for what should profit only the common weal. Take away the stimulus of individuality, and action is paralyzed at once. For with most men the promptings of personal advantage only afford sufficient incentive to effort. Destroy this force, then any consideration due it lapses, and socialism is not only justified, it is raised instantly into an axiom of life. The community, in that case, becomes itself the unit, the indivisible atom of existence. Socialism, then communism, then nihilism, follow in inevitable sequence. That even the Far Oriental,

with all his numbing impersonality, has not touched this goal may at least suggest that individuality is a fact.

But first, what do we know about its existence ourselves?

Very early in the course of every thoughtful childhood an event takes place, by the side of which, to the child himself, all other events sink into insignificance. It is not one that is recognized and chronicled by the world, for it is wholly unconnected with action. No one but the child is aware of its occurrence, and he never speaks of it to others. Yet to that child it marks an epoch. So intensely individual does it seem that the boy is afraid to avow it, while in reality so universal is it that probably no human being has escaped its influence. Though subjective purely, it has more vividness than any external event; and though strictly intrinsic to life, it is more startling than any accident of fate or fortune. This experience of the boy's, at once so singular and yet so general, is nothing less than the sudden revelation to him one day of the fact of his own personality.

Somewhere about the time when sensa-





YOUNG JAPAN

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tion is giving place to sensitiveness as the great self-educator, and the knowledge gained by the five bodily senses is being fused into the wisdom of that mental one we call common sense, the boy makes a discovery akin to the act of waking up. All at once he becomes conscious of himself; and the consciousness has about it a touch of the uncanny. Hitherto he has been aware only of matter; he now first realizes mind. Unwarned, unprepared, he is suddenly ushered before being, and stands awe-struck in the presence of — himself.

If the introduction to his own identity was startling, there is nothing reassuring in the feeling that this strange acquaintanceship must last. For continue it does. It becomes an unsought intimacy he cannot shake off. Like to his own shadow he cannot escape it. To himself a man cannot but be at home. For years this alter ego haunts him, for he imagines it an idiosyncrasy of his own, a morbid peculiarity he dare not confide to any one, for fear of being thought a fool. Not till long afterwards, when he has learned to live as a matter of course with his ever-present

ghost, does he discover that others have had like familiars themselves.

Sometimes this dawn of consciousness is preceded by a long twilight of soul-awakening; but sometimes, upon more sensitive and subtler natures, the light breaks with all the suddenness of a sunrise at the equator, revealing to the mind's eye an unsuspected world of self within. But in whatever way we may awake to it, the sense of personality, when first realized, appears already, like the fabled Goddess of Wisdom, full grown in the brain. From the moment when we first remember ourselves we seem to be as old as we ever seem to others afterwards to become. We grow, indeed, in knowledge, in wisdom, in experience, as our years increase, but deep down in our heart of hearts we are still essentially the same. To be sure, people pay us more deference than they did, which suggests a doubt at times whether we may not have changed; small boys of a succeeding generation treat us with a respect that causes us inwardly to smile, as we think how little we differ from them, if they but knew it. For at bottom we are not conscious of change from that morning, long ago, when

first we realized ourselves. We feel just as young now as we felt old then. We are but amused at the world's discrimination where we can detect no difference.

Every human being has been thus "twice born": once as matter, once as mind. Nor is this second birth the birthright only of mankind. All the higher animals probably, possibly even the lower too, have experienced some such realization of individual identity. However that may be, certainly to all races of men has come this revelation; only the degree in which they have felt its force has differed immensely. It is one thing to the apathetic, fatalistic Turk, and quite another matter to an energetic, nervous American. Facts, fancies, faiths, all show how wide is the variance in feelings. With them no introspective *γνώσις* *σέαυτον* overexcites the consciousness of self. But with us, as with those of old possessed of devils, it comes to startle and stays to distress. Too apt is it to prove an ever-present, undesirable double. Too often does it play the part of uninvited spectre at the feast, whose presence no one save its unfortunate victim suspects. The haunting horror of his own identity is to natures

far less eccentric than Kenelm Chillingly's only too common a curse. To this companionship, paradoxical though it sound, is principally due the peculiar loneliness of childhood. For nothing is so isolating as a persistent idea which one dares not confide.

And yet, — stranger paradox still, — was there ever any one willing to exchange his personality for another's? Who can imagine foregoing his own self? Nay, do we not cling even to its outward appearance? Is there a man so poor in all that man holds dear that he does not keenly resent being accidentally mistaken for his neighbor? Surely there must be something more than mirage in this deep-implanted, widespread instinct of human race.

But however strong the conviction now of one's individuality, is there aught to assure him of its continuance beyond the confines of its present life? Will it awake on death's morrow and know itself, or will it, like the body that gave it lodgment, disintegrate again into indistinguishable spirit dust? Close upon the heels of the existing consciousness of self treads the shadow-like doubt of its hereafter. Will analogy



A TEMPLE IN THE HEART OF JAPAN

0700



help to answer the grewsome riddle of the Sphinx? Are the laws we have learned to be true for matter true also for mind? Matter we now know is indestructible; yet the form of it with which we once were so fondly familiar vanishes never to return. Is a like fate to be the lot of the soul? That mind should be capable of annihilation is as inconceivable as that matter should cease to be. Surely the spirit we feel existing round about us on every side now has been from ever, and will be for ever to come. But that portion of it which we each know as self, is it not like to a drop of rain seen in its falling through the air? Indistinguishable the particle was in the cloud whence it came; indistinguishable it will become again in the ocean whither it is bound. Its personality is but its passing phase from a vast impersonal on the one hand to an equally vast impersonal on the other. Thus seers preached in the past; so modern science is hinting to-day. With us the idea seems the bitter fruit of material philosophy; by them it was looked upon as the fairest flower of their faith. What is dreaded now as the impious suggestion of the godless four thousand years

ago was revered as a sacred tenet of religion.

Shorter even than his short threescore years and ten is that soul's life of which man is directly cognizant. Bounded by two seemingly impersonal states is the personal consciousness of which he is made aware: the one the infantile existence that precedes his boyish discovery, the other the gloom that grows with years, — two twilights that fringe the two borders of his day. But with the Far Oriental, life is all twilight. For in Japan and China both states are found together. There, side by side with the present unconsciousness of the babe exists the belief in a coming unconsciousness for the man. So inseparably blended are the two that the known truth of the one seems, for that very bond, to carry with it the credentials of the other. Can it be that the personal, progressive West is wrong, and the impersonal, impassive East right? Surely not. Is the other side of the world in advance of us in mind-development, even as it precedes us in the time of day; or just as our noon is its night, may it not be far in our rear? Is not its seeming wisdom rather the pre-

ciousness of what is destined never to go far?

Brought suddenly upon such a civilization, after the blankness of a long ocean voyage, one is reminded instinctively of the feelings of that bewildered individual who, after a dinner at which he had eventually ceased to be himself, was by way of pleasantry left out overnight in a graveyard, on their way home, by his humorously inclined companions; and who, on awaking alone, in a still dubious condition, looked around him in surprise, rubbed his eyes two or three times to no purpose, and finally muttered in a tone of awe-struck conviction, "Well, either I'm the first to rise, or I'm a long way behind time!"

Whether their failure to follow the natural course of evolution results in bringing them in at the death just the same or not, these people are now, at any rate, stationary not very far from the point at which we all set out. They are still in that childish state of development before self-consciousness has spoiled the sweet simplicity of nature. An impersonal race seems never to have fully grown up.

Partly for its own sake, partly for ours,

this most distinctive feature of the Far East, its marked impersonality, is well worthy particular attention; for while it collaterally suggests pregnant thoughts about ourselves, it directly underlies the deeper oddities of a civilization which is the modern eighth wonder of the world. We shall see this as we look at what these people are, at what they were, and at what they hope to become; not historically, but psychologically, as one might perceive, were he but wise enough, in an acorn, besides the nut itself, two oaks, that one from which it fell, and that other which from it will rise. These three states, which we may call its potential past, present, and future, may be observed and studied in three special outgrowths of a race's character: in its language, in its every-day thoughts, and in its religion. For in the language of a people we find embalmed the spirit of its past; in its every-day thoughts, be they of arts or sciences, is wrapped up its present life; in its religion lie enfolded its dreamings of a future. From out each of these three subjects in the Far East impersonality stares us in the face. Upon this quality as a foundation

rests the Far Oriental character. It is individually rather than nationally that I propose to scan it now. It is the action of a particle in the wave of world-development I would watch, rather than the propagation of the wave itself. Inferences about the movement of the whole will follow of themselves a knowledge of the motion of its parts.

But before we attack the subject esoterically, let us look a moment at the man as he appears in his relation to the community. Such a glance will suggest the peculiar atmosphere of impersonality that pervades the people.

However lacking in cleverness, in merit, or in imagination a man may be, there are in our Western world, if his existence there be so much as noticed at all, three occasions on which he appears in print. His birth, his marriage, and his death are all duly chronicled in type, perhaps as sufficiently typical of the general unimportance of his life. Mention of one's birth, it is true, is an aristocratic privilege, confined to the world of English society. In democratic America, no doubt because all men there are supposed to be born free and

equal, we ignore the first event, and mention only the last two episodes, about which our national astuteness asserts no such effacing equality.

Accepting our newspaper record as a fair enough summary of the biography of an average man, let us look at these three momentous occasions in the career of a Far Oriental.

## II.

### FAMILY.

IN the first place, then, the poor little Japanese baby is ushered into this world in a sadly impersonal manner, for he is not even accorded the distinction of a birthday. He is permitted instead only the much less special honor of a birth-year. Not that he begins his separate existence otherwise than is the custom of mortals generally, at a definite instant of time, but that very little subsequent notice is ever taken of the fact. On the contrary, from the moment he makes his appearance he is spoken of as a year old, and this same age he continues to be considered in most simple ease of calculation, till the beginning of the next calendar year. When that epoch of general rejoicing arrives, he is credited with another year himself. So is everybody else. New Year's day is a common birthday for the community, a sort of impersonal anniver-

sary for his whole world. A like reckoning is followed in China and Korea. Upon the disadvantages of being considered from one's birth up at least one year and possibly two older than one really is, it lies beyond our present purpose to expatiate. It is quite evident that woman has had no voice in the framing of such a chronology. One would hardly imagine that man had either, so astronomic is the system. A communistic age is however but an unavoidable detail of the general scheme whose most suggestive feature consists in the subordination of the actual birthday of the individual to the fictitious birthday of the community. For it is not so much the want of commemoration shown the subject as the character of the commemoration which is significant. Some slight notice is indeed paid to birthdays during early childhood, but even then their observance is quite secondary in importance to that of the great impersonal anniversaries of the third day of the third moon and the fifth day of the fifth moon. These two occasions celebrated the coming of humanity into the world with an impersonality worthy of the French revolutionary calen-





FESTIVAL OF FISHES

1960

dar. The first of them is called the festival of girls, and commemorates the birth of girls generally, the advent of the universal feminine, as one may say. The second is a corresponding anniversary for boys. Owing to its sex, the latter is the greater event of the two, and in consequence of its most conspicuous feature is styled the festival of fishes. The fishes are hollow paper images of the "tai" from four to six feet in length, tied to the top of a long pole planted in the ground and tipped with a gilded ball. Holes in the paper at the mouth and the tail enable the wind to inflate the body so that it floats about horizontally, swaying hither and thither, and tugging at the line after the manner of a living thing. The fish are emblems of good luck, and are set up in the courtyard of every house where a son has been born during the year. On this auspicious day Tokio is suddenly transformed into eighty square miles of aquarium.

For any more personal purpose New Year's day eclipses all particular anniversaries. Then everybody congratulates everybody else upon everything in general, and incidentally upon being alive. Such substitution of an abstract for a concrete birth-

day, although exceedingly convenient for others, must at least conduce to self-forgetfulness on the part of its proper possessor, and tend inevitably to merge the identity of the individual in that of the community.

It fares hardly better with the Far Oriental in the matter of marriage. Although he is, as we might think, the person most interested in the result, he is permitted no say in the affair whatever. In fact, it is not his affair at all, but his father's. His hand is simply made a cat's-paw of. The matter is entirely a business transaction, entered into by the parent and conducted through regular marriage brokers. In it he plays only the part of a marionette. His revenge for being thus bartered out of what might be the better half of his life, he takes eventually on the next succeeding generation.

His death may be said to be the most important act of his whole life. For then only can his personal existence be properly considered to begin. By it he joins the great company of ancestors who are to these people of almost more consequence than living folk, and of much more individual distinction. Particularly is this the case

in China and Korea, but the same respect, though in a somewhat less rigid form, is paid the dead in Japan. Then at last the individual receives that recognition which was denied him in the flesh. In Japan a mortuary tablet is set up to him in the house and duly worshipped; on the continent the ancestors are given a dwelling of their own, and even more devotedly revered. But in both places the cult is anything but funereal. For the ancestral tombs are temples and pleasure pavilions at the same time, consecrated not simply to rites and ceremonies, but to family gatherings and general jollification. And the fortunate defunct must feel, if he is still half as sentient as his dutiful descendants suppose, that his earthly life, like other approved comedies, has ended well.

Important, however, as these critical points in his career may be reckoned by his relatives, they are scarcely calculated to prove equally epochal to the man himself. In a community where next to no note is ever taken of the anniversary of his birth, some doubt as to the special significance of that red-letter day may not unnaturally creep into his own mind. While in regard to his death, although it may be highly

flattering for him to know that he will certainly become somebody when he shall have ceased, practically, to be anybody, such tardy recognition is scarcely timely enough to be properly appreciated. Human nature is so earth-tied, after all, that a post-mundane existence is very apt to seem immaterial as well as be so.

With the old familiar landmarks of life obliterated in this wholesale manner, it is to be doubted whether one of us, placed in the midst of such a civilization, would know himself. He certainly would derive but scanty satisfaction from the recognition if he did. Even Nirvana might seem a happy limbo by comparison. With a communal, not to say a cosmic, birthday, and a conventional wife, he might well deem his separate existence the shadow of a shade and embrace Buddhism from mere force of circumstances.

Further investigation would not shake his opinion. For a far-oriental career is thoroughly in keeping with these, its typical turning-points. From one end of its course to the other it is painfully impersonal. In its regular routine as in its more salient junctures, life presents itself to these races a totally different affair from what it

seems to us. The cause lies in what is taken to be the basis of socio-biology, if one may so express it.

In the Far East the social unit, the ultimate molecule of existence, is not the individual, but the family.

We occidentals think we value family. We even parade our pretensions so prominently as sometimes to tread on other people's prejudices of a like nature. Yet we scarcely seem to appreciate the inheritance. For with a logic which does us questionable credit, we are proud of our ancestors in direct proportion to their remoteness from ourselves, thus permitting Democracy to revenge its insignificance by smiling at our self-imposed satire. To esteem a man in inverse ratio to the amount of remarkable blood he has inherited is, to say the least, bathetic. Others, again, make themselves objectionable by preferring their immediate relatives to all less connected companions, and cling to their cousins so closely that affection often culminates in matrimony, nature's remonstrances notwithstanding. But with all the pride or pleasure which we take in the members of our particular clan, our satisfaction really springs from viewing them on an autocentric theory of

the social system. In our own eyes we are the star about which, as in Joseph's dream, our relatives revolve and upon which they help to shed an added lustre. Our Ptolemaic theory of society is necessitated by our tenacity to the personal standpoint. This fixed idea of ours causes all else seemingly to rotate about it. Such an egoistic conception is quite foreign to our longitudinal antipodes. However much appearances may agree, the fundamental principles upon which family consideration is based are widely different in the two hemispheres. For the far-eastern social universe turns on a patricentric pivot.

Upon the conception of the family as the social and political unit depends the whole constitution of China. The same theory somewhat modified constitutes the life-principle of Korea, of Japan, and of their less advanced cousins who fill the vast centre of the Asiatic continent. From the emperor on his throne to the common coolie in his hovel it is the idea of kinship that knits the entire body politic together. The Empire is one great family; the family is a little empire.

The one developed out of the other. The patriarchal is, as is well known, probably the oldest political system in the world.



All nations may be said to have experienced such a paternal government, but most nations outgrew it.

Now the interesting fact about the yellow branch of the human race is, not that they had so juvenile a constitution, but that they have it; that it has persisted practically unchanged from prehistoric ages. It is certainly surprising in this kaleidoscopic world whose pattern is constantly changing as time merges one combination of its elements into another, that on the other side of the globe this set should have remained the same. Yet in spite of the lapse of years, in spite of the altered conditions of existence, in spite of an immense advance in civilization, such a primitive state of society has continued there to the present day, in all its essentials what it was when as nomads the race forefathers wandered peacefully or otherwise over the plains of Central Asia. The principle helped them to expand; it has simply cramped them ever since. For, instead of dissolving like other antiquated views, it has become, what it was bound to become if it continued to last, crystallized into an institution. It had practically reached this condition when it received a theoretical, not to say a theo-

logical recognition which gave it mundane immortality. A couple of millenniums ago Confucius consecrated filial duty by making it the basis of the Chinese moral code. His hand was the finishing touch of fossilification. For since the sage set his seal upon the system no one has so much as dreamt of changing it. The idea of confuting Confucius would be an act of impiety such as no Chinaman could possibly commit. Not that the inadmissibility of argument is due really to the authority of the philosopher, but that it lies ingrained in the character of the people. Indeed the genius of the one may be said to have consisted in divining the genius of the other. Confucius formulated the prevailing practice, and in so doing helped to make it perpetual. He gave expression to the national feeling, and like expressions, generally his, served to stamp the idea all the more indelibly upon the national consciousness.

In this manner the family from a natural relation grew into a highly unnatural social anachronism. The loose ties of a roving life became fetters of a fixed conventionality. Bonds originally of mutual advantage hardened into restrictions by which the young were hopelessly tethered to the

old. Midway in its course the race undertook to turn round and face backwards, as it journeyed on. Its subsequent advance could be nothing but slow. ✓

The head of a family is so now in something of a corporeal sense. From him emanate all its actions; to him are responsible all its parts. Any other member of it is as incapable of individual expression as is the hand, or the foot, or the eye of man. Indeed, Confucian doctors of divinity might appropriately administer psychically to the egoistic the rebuke of the Western physician to the too self-analytic youth who, finding that, after eating, his digestion failed to give him what he considered its proper sensations, had come to consult the doctor as to how it ought to feel. "Feel! young man," he was answered, "you ought not to be aware that you have a digestion." So with them, a normally constituted son knows not what it is to possess a spontaneity of his own. Indeed, this very word "own," which so long ago in our own tongue took to itself the symbol of possession, well exemplifies his dependent state. China furnishes the most conspicuous instance of the want of individual rights. A Chinese son cannot properly be

said to own anything. The title to the land he tills is vested absolutely in the family, of which he is an undivided thirtieth, or what-not. Even the administration of the property is not his, but resides in the family, represented by its head. The outward symbols of ownership testify to the fact. The bourns that mark the boundaries of the fields bear the names of families, not of individuals. The family, as such, is the proprietor, and its lands are cultivated and enjoyed in common by all the constituents of the clan. In the tenure of its real estate, the Chinese family much resembles the Russian Mir. But so far as his personal state is concerned, the Chinese son outslaves the Slav. For he lives at home, under the immediate control of the paternal will — in the most complete of serfdoms, a filial one. Even existence becomes a communal affair. From the family mansion, or set of mansions, in which all its members dwell, to the family mausoleum, to which they will all eventually be borne, a man makes his life journey in strict company with his kin.

A man's life is thus but an undivisible fraction of the family life. How essen-



**THE OLDER SISTER**

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tially so will appear from the following slight sketch of it.

To begin at the beginning, his birth is a very important event — for the household, at which no one fails to rejoice except the new-comer. He cries. The general joy, however, depends somewhat upon his sex. If the baby chances to be a boy, everybody is immensely pleased; if a girl, there is considerably less effusion shown. In the latter case the more impulsive relatives are unmistakably sorry; the more philosophic evidently hope for better luck next time. Both kinds make very pretty speeches, which not even the speakers believe, for in the babe lottery the family is considered to have drawn a blank. A delight so engendered proves how little of the personal, even in prospective, attaches to its object. The reason for the invidious distinction in the matter of sex lies of course in an inordinate desire for the perpetuation of the family line. The unfortunate infant is regarded merely in the light of a possible progenitor. A boy is already potentially a father; whereas a girl, if she marry at all, is bound to marry out of her own family into another, and is relatively

lost. The full force of the deprivation is, however, to some degree tempered by the almost infinite possibilities of adoption. Daughters are, therefore, not utterly unmitigable evils.

From the privacy of the domestic circle, the infant's entrance into public life is performed pick-a-back. Strapped securely to the shoulders of a slightly older sister, out he goes, consigned to the tender mercies of a being who is scarcely more than a baby herself. The diminutiveness of the nurse-perambulators is the most surprising part of the performance. The tiniest of tots may be seen thus toddling round with burdens half their own size. Like the dot upon the little i, the baby's head seems a natural part of their childish ego.

An economy of the kind in the matter of nurses is highly suggestive. That it should be practicable thus to entrust one infant to another proves the precociousness of children. But this surprising maturity of the young implies by a law too well known to need explanation, the consequent immaturity of the race. That which has less to grow up to, naturally grows up to its limit sooner. It may even be questioned



whether it does not do so with the more haste ; on the same principle that a runner who has less distance to travel not only accomplishes his course quicker, but moves with relatively greater speed, or as a small planet grows old not simply sooner, but comparatively faster than a larger one. Jupiter is still in his fiery youth, while the moon is senile in decrepid old age, and yet his separate existence began long before hers. Either hypothesis will explain the abnormally early development of the Chinese race, and its subsequent career of inactivity. Meanwhile the youthful nurse, in blissful ignorance of the evidence which her present precocity affords against her future possibilities, pursues her sports with intermittent attention to her charge, whose poor little head lolls about, now on one side and now on the other, in a most distressingly loose manner, an uninterested spectator of the proceedings.

As soon as the babe gets a trifle bigger he ceases to be ministered to and begins his long course of ministering to others. His home life consists of attentive subordination. The relation his obedience bears to that of children elsewhere is paralleled per-

haps sufficiently by the comparative importance attached to precepts on the subject in the respective moral codes. The commandment "honor thy father" forms a tithe of the Mosaic law, while the same injunction constitutes at least one half of the Confucian precepts. To the Chinese child all the parental commands are not simply law to the letter, they are to be anticipated in the spirit. To do what he is told is but the merest fraction of his duty; theoretically his only thought is how to serve his sire. The pious Æneas escaping from Troy exemplifies his conduct when it comes to a question of domestic precedence, — whose first care, it will be remembered, was for his father, his next for his son, and his last for his wife. He lost his wife, it may be noted in passing. Filial piety is the greatest of Chinese virtues. Indeed, an undutiful son is a monstrosity, a case of moral deformity. It could now hardly be otherwise. For a father sums up *in propria persona* a whole pedigree of patriarchs whose superimposed weight of authority is practically divine. This condition of servitude is never outgrown by the individual, as it has never been outgrown by the race.

Our boy now begins to go to school; to a day school, it need hardly be specified, for a boarding school would be entirely out of keeping with the family life. Here, he is given the "Trimetrical Classic" to start on, that he may learn the characters by heart, picking up incidentally what ideas he may. This book is followed by the "Century of Surnames," a catalogue of all the clan names in China, studied like the last for the sake of the characters, although the suggestion of the importance of the family contained in it is probably not lost upon his youthful mind. Next comes the "Thousand Character Classic," a wonderful epic as a feat of skill, for of the thousand characters which it contains not a single one is repeated, an absence of tautology not properly appreciated by the enforced reader. Reminiscences of our own school days vividly depict the consequent disgust, instead of admiration, of the boy. Three more books succeed these first volumes, differing from one another in form, but in substance singularly alike, treating, as they all do, of history and ethics combined. For tales and morals are inseparably associated by pious antiquity.

Indeed, the past would seem to have lived with special reference to the edification of the future. Chinamen were abnormally virtuous in those golden days, barring the few unfortunates whom fate needed as warning examples of depravity for succeeding ages. Except for the fact that instruction as to a future life forms no part of the curriculum, a far-eastern education may be said to consist of Sunday-school every day in the week. For no occasion is lost by the erudite authors, even in the most worldly portions of their work, for preaching a slight homily on the subject in hand. The dictum of Dionysius of Halicarnassus that "history is philosophy teaching by example" would seem there to have become modified into "history is filiosophy teaching by example." For in the instructive anecdotes every other form of merit is depicted as second to that of being a dutiful son. To the practice of that supreme virtue all other considerations are sacrificed. The student's aim is thus kept single. At every turn of the leaves, paragons of filial piety shame the youthful reader to the pitch of emulation by the epitaphic records of their deeds. Portraits of the

past, possibly colored, present that estimable trait in so exalted a type that to any less filial a people they would simply deter competition. Yet the boy implicitly believes and no doubt resolves to rival what he reads. A specimen or two will amply suggest the rest. In one tale the hero is held up to the unqualified admiration of posterity for having starved to death his son, in an extreme case of family destitution, for the sake of providing food enough for his aged father. In another he unhesitatingly divorces his wife for having dared to poke fun, in the shape of bodkins, at some wooden effigies of his parents which he had had set up in the house for daily devotional contemplation. Finally another paragon actually sells himself in perpetuity as a slave that he may thus procure the wherewithal to bury with due honor his anything but worthy progenitor, who had first cheated his neighbors and then squandered his ill-gotten gains in riotous living. Of these tales, as of certain questionable novels in a slightly different line, the eventual moral is considered quite competent to redeem the general immorality of the plot.

Along such a curriculum the youthful

Chinaman is made to run. A very similar system prevails in Japan, the difference between the two consisting in quantity rather than quality. The books in the two cases are much the same, and the amount read differs surprisingly little when we consider that in the one case it is his own classics the student is reading, in the other the Chinaman's.

If he belong to the middle class, as soon as his schooling is over he is set to learn his father's trade. To undertake to learn any trade but his father's would strike the family as simply preposterous. Why should he adopt another line of business? And, if he did, what other business should he adopt? Is his father's occupation not already there, a part of the existing order of things; and is he not the son of his father and heir therefore of the paternal skill? Not that such inherited aptness is recognized scientifically; it is simply taken for granted instinctively. It is but a half-hearted intuition, however, for the possibility of an inheritance from the mother's side is as out of the question as if her severance from her own family had an *ex post facto* effect. As for his individual predilection

in the matter, nature has considerably conformed to custom by giving him none. He becomes a cabinet-maker, for instance, because his ancestors always have been cabinet-makers. He inherits the family business as a necessary part of the family name. He is born to his trade, not naturally selected because of his fitness for it. But he usually is amply qualified for the position, for generations of practice, if only on one side of the house, accumulate a vast deal of technical skill. The result of this system of clan guilds in all branches of industry is sufficiently noticeable. The almost infinite superiority of Japanese artisans over their European fellow-craftsmen is world-known. On the other hand the tendency of the occupation in the abstract to swallow up the individual in the concrete is as evident to theory as it is patent in practice. Eventually the man is lost in the manner. The very names of trades express the fact. The Japanese word for cabinet-maker, for example, means literally cutting-thing-house, and is now applied as distinctively to the man as to his shop. Nominally as well as practically the youthful Japanese artisan makes his introduction to the world, much after

the manner of the hero of Lecocq's comic opera, the son of the house of Marasquin et Cie.

If instead of belonging to the lower middle class our typical youth be born of bluer blood, or if he be filled with the same desires as if he were so descended, he becomes a student. Having failed to discover in the school-room the futility of his country's self-vaunted learning, he proceeds to devote his life to its pursuit. With an application which is eminently praiseworthy, even if its object be not, he sets to work to steep himself in the classics till he can perceive no merit in anything else. As might be suspected, he ends by discovering in the sayings of the past more meaning than the simple past ever dreamed of putting there. He becomes more Confucian than Confucius. Indeed, it is fortunate for the reputation of the sage that he cannot return to earth, for he might disagree to his detriment with his own commentators.

Such is the state of things in China and Korea. Learning, however, is not dependent solely on individual interest for its wonderfully flourishing condition in the Middle Kingdom, for the government abets





AGAINST THE SKY

Real

the practice to its utmost. It is itself the supreme sanction, for its posts are the prizes of proficiency. Through the study of the classics lies the only entrance to political power. To become a mandarin one must have passed a series of competitive examinations on these very subjects, and competition in this impersonal field is most keen. For while popular enthusiasm for philosophy for philosophy's sake might, among any people, eventually show symptoms of fatigue, it is not likely to flag where the outcome of it is so substantial. Erudition carries there all earthly emoluments in its train. For the man who can write the most scholastic essay on the classics is forthwith permitted to amass much honor and more wealth by wronging his less accomplished fellow-citizens. China is a student's paradise where the possession of learning is instantly convertible into unlimited pelf.

In Japan the study of the classics was never pursued professionally. It was, however, prosecuted with much zeal *en amateur*. The Chinese bureaucratic system has been wanting. For in spite of her students, until within thirty years Japan slumbered still

in the Knight-time of the Middle Ages, and so long as a man carried about with him continually two beautiful swords he felt it incumbent upon him to use them. The happy days of knight-errantry have passed. These same cavaliers of Samurai are now thankful to police the streets in spectacles necessitated by the too diligent study of German text, and arrest chance disturbers of the public peace for a miserably small salary per month.

Our youth has now reached the flowering season of life, that brief May time when the whole world takes on the rose-tint, and when by all dramatic laws he ought to fall in love. He does nothing of the kind. Sad to say, he is a stranger to the feeling. Love, as we understand the word, is a thing unknown to the Far East ; fortunately, indeed, for the possession there of the tender passion would be worse than useless. Its indulgence would work no end of disturbance to the community at large, beside entailing much misery upon its individual victim. Its exercise would probably be classed with kleptomania and other like excesses of purely personal consideration. The community could never permit the

practice, for it strikes at the very root of their whole social system.

The immense loss in happiness to these people in consequence of the omission by the too parsimonious Fates of that thread, which, with us, spins the whole of woman's web of life, and at least weaves the warp of man's, is but incidental to the present subject; the effect of the loss upon the individuality of the person himself is what concerns us now.

If there is one moment in a man's life when his interest for the world at large pales before the engrossing character of his own emotions, it is assuredly when that man first falls in love. Then, if never before, the world within excludes the world without. For of all our human passions none is so isolating as the tenderest. To shut that one other being in, we must of necessity shut all the rest of mankind out; and we do so with a reckless trust in our own self-sufficiency which has about it a touch of the sublime. The other millions are as though they were not, and we two are alone in the earth, which suddenly seems to have grown unprecedentedly beautiful. Indeed, it only needs such judicious depopulation to

make of any spot an Eden. Perhaps the early Jewish myth-makers had some such thought in mind when they wrote their idyl of the cosmogony. The human traits are true to-day. Then at last our souls throw aside their conventional wrappings to stand revealed as they really are. Certain of comprehension, the thoughts we have never dared breathe to any one before, find a tongue for her who seems fore-destined to understand. The long-closed floodgates of feeling are thrown wide, and our personality, pent up from the time of its inception for very mistrust, sweeps forth in one uncontrollable rush. For then the most reticent becomes confiding; the most self-contained expands. Then every detail of our past lives assumes an importance which even we had not divined. To her we tell them all,—our boyish beliefs, our youthful fancies, the foolish with the fine, the witty with the wise, the little with the great. Nothing then seems quite unworthy, as nothing seems quite worthy enough. Flowers and weeds that we plucked upon our pathway, we heap them in her lap, certain that even the poorest will not be tossed aside. Small wonder that we bring as many as we may

when she bends her head so lovingly to each.

As our past rises in reminiscence with all its oldtime reality, no less clearly does our future stand out to us in mirage. What we would be seems as realizable as what we were. Seen by another beside ourselves, our castles in the air take on something of the substance of stereoscopic sight. Our airiest fancies seem solid facts for their reality to her, and gilded by lovelight, they glitter and sparkle like a true palace of the East. For once all is possible; nothing lies beyond our reach. And as we talk, and she listens, we two seem to be floating off into an empyrean of our own like the summer clouds above our heads, as they sail dreamily on into the far-away depths of the unfathomable sky.

It would be more than mortal not to believe in ourselves when another believes so absolutely in us. Our most secret thoughts are no longer things to be ashamed of, for she has sanctioned them. Whatever doubt may have shadowed us as to our own imaginings disappears before the smile of her appreciation. That her appreciation may be prejudiced is not a possibility we think

of then. She understands us, or seems to do so to our own better understanding of ourselves. Happy the man who is thus understood! Happy even he who imagines that he is, because of her eager wish to comprehend; fortunate, indeed, if in this one respect he never comes to see too clearly.

No such blissful infatuation falls to the lot of the Far Oriental. He never is the dupe of his own desire, the willing victim of his self-illusion. He is never tempted to reveal himself, and by thus revealing, realize. No loving appreciation urges him on toward the attainment of his own ideal. That incitement to be what he would seem to be, to become what she deems becoming, he fails to feel. Custom has so far fettered fancy that even the wish to communicate has vanished. He has now nothing to tell; she needs no ear to hear. For she is not his love; she is only his wife, — what is left of a romance when the romance is left out. Worse still, she never was anything else. He has not so much as a memory of her, for he did not marry her for love; he may not love of his own accord, nor for the matter of that does he wish to do so. If by some mischance he should so far forget to forget



himself, it were much better for him had he not done so, for the choice of a bride is not his, nor of a bridegroom hers. Marriage to a Far Oriental is the most important mercantile transaction of his whole life. It is, therefore, far too weighty a matter to be entrusted to his youthful indiscretion; for although the person herself is of lamentably little account in the bargain, the character of her worldly circumstances is most material to it. So she is contracted for with the same care one would exercise in the choice of any staple business commodity. The particular sample is not vital to the trade, but the grade of goods is. She is selected much as the bride of the Vicar of Wakefield chose her wedding-gown, only that the one was at least cut to suit, while the other is not. It is certainly easier, if less fitting, to get a wife as some people do clothes, not to their own order, but ready made; all the more reason when the bargain is for one's son, not one's self. So the Far East, which looks at the thing from a strictly paternal standpoint and ignores such trifles as personal preferences, takes its boy to the broker's and fits him out. That the object of such parental care does

not end by murdering his unfortunate spouse or making way with himself suggests how dead already is that individuality which we deem to be of the very essence of the thing.

Marriage is thus a species of investment contracted by the existing family for the sake of the prospective one, the actual participants being only lay figures in the affair. Sometimes the father decides the matter himself; sometimes he or the relative who stands *in loco parentis* calls for a plebiscit on the subject; for such an extension of the suffrage has gradually crept even into patriarchal institutions. The family then assemble, sit in solemn conclave on the question, and decide it by vote. Of course the interested parties are not asked their opinion, as it might be prejudiced. The result of the conference must be highly gratifying. To have one's wife chosen for one by vote of one's relatives cannot but be satisfactory — to the electors. The outcome of this ballot, like that of universal suffrage elsewhere, is at the best unobjectionable mediocrity. Somehow such a result does not seem quite to fulfil one's ideal of a wife. It is true that the upper

classes of impersonal France practise this method of marital selection, their *conseils de famille* furnishing in some sort a parallel. But, as is well known, matrimony among these same upper classes is largely form devoid of substance. It begins impressively with a dual ceremony, the civil contract, which amounts to a contract of civility between the parties, and a religious rite to render the same perpetual, and there it is too apt to end.

So much for the immediate influence on the man; the eventual effect on the race remains to be considered. Now, if the first result be anything, the second must in the end be everything. For however trifling it be in the individual instance, it goes on accumulating with each successive generation, like compound interest. The choosing of a wife by family suffrage is not simply an exponent of the impersonal state of things, it is a power toward bringing such a state of things about. A hermit seldom develops to his full possibilities, and the domestic variety is no exception to the rule. A man who is linked to some one that toward him remains a cipher lacks surroundings inciting to psychological growth,

nor is he more favorably circumstanced because all his ancestors have been similarly circumscribed.

As if to make assurance doubly sure, natural selection here steps in to further the process. To prove this with all the rigidity of demonstration desirable is in the present state of erotics beyond our power. Until our family trees give us something more than mere skeletons of dead branches, we must perforce continue ignorant of the science of grafts. For the nonce we must be content to generalize from our own premises, only rising above them sufficiently to get a bird's-eye view of our neighbor's estates. Such a survey has at least one advantage: the whole field of view appears perfectly plain.

Surveying the subject, then, from this ego-altruistic position, we can perceive why matrimony, as we practise it, should result in increasing the personality of our race: for the reason namely that psychical similarity determines the selection. At first sight, indeed, such a natural affinity would seem to have little or nothing to do with marriage. As far as outsiders are capable of judging, unlikes appear to fancy one

another quite as gratuitously as do likes. Connubial couples are often anything but twin souls. Yet our own dual use of the word "like" bears historic witness to the contrary. For in this expression we have a record from early Gothic times that men liked others for being like themselves. Since then, our feelings have not changed materially, although our mode of showing them is slightly less intense. In those simple days stranger and enemy were synonymous terms, and their objects were received in a corresponding spirit. In our present refined civilization we hurl epithets instead of spears, and content ourselves with branding as heterodox the opinions of another which do not happen to coincide with our own. The instinct of self-development naturally begets this self-sided view. We insensibly find those persons congenial whose ideas resemble ours, and gravitate to them, as leaves on a pond do to one another, nearer and nearer till they touch. Is it likely, then, that in the most important case of all the rule should suddenly cease to hold? Is it to be presumed that even Socrates chose Xantippe for her remarkable contrariety to himself?

Mere physical attraction is another matter. Corporeally considered, men not infrequently fall in love with their opposites, the phenomenally tall with the painfully short, the unnecessarily stout with the distressingly slender. But even such inartistic juxtapositions are much less common than we are apt at times to think. For it must never be forgotten that the exceptional character of the phenomena renders them conspicuous, the customary more consorted combinations failing to excite attention.

Besides, there exists a reason for physical incongruity which does not hold psychically. Nature sanctions the one while she discountenances the other. Instead of the forethought she once bestowed upon the body, it receives at her hands now but the scantiest attention. Its development has ceased to be an object with her. For some time past almost all her care has been devoted to the evolution of the soul. The consequence is that physically man is much less specialized than many other animals. In other words, he is bodily less advanced in the race for competitive extermination. He belongs to an antiquated, inefficient type

of mammal. His organism is still of the jack-of-all-trades pattern, such as prevailed generally in the more youthful stages of organic life—one not specially suited to any particular pursuit. Were it not for his cerebral convolutions he could not compete for an instant in the struggle for existence, and even the monkey would reign in his stead. But brain is more effective than biceps, and a being who can kill his opponent farther off than he can see him evidently needs no great excellence of body to survive his foe.

The field of competition has thus been transferred from matter to mind, but the fight has lost none of its keenness in consequence. With the same zeal with which advantageous anatomical variations were seized upon and perpetuated, psychical ones are now grasped and rendered hereditary. Now if opposites were to fancy and wed one another, such fortunate improvements would soon be lost. They would be scattered over the community at large even if they escaped entire neutralization. To prevent so disastrous a result nature implants a desire for resemblance, which desire man instinctively acts upon.

Complete compatibility of temperament is of course a thing not to be expected nor indeed to be desired, since it would defeat its own end by allowing no room for variation. A fairly broad basis of agreement, however, exists even when least suspected. This common ground of content consists of those qualities held to be most essential by the individuals concerned, although not necessarily so appearing to other people. Sometimes, indeed, these qualities are still in the larvæ state of desires. They are none the less potent upon the man's personality on that account, for the wish is always father to its own fulfilment.

The want of conjugal resemblance not only works mediately on the child, it works mutually on the parents; for companionship, as is well recognized, tends to similarity. Now companionship is the last thing to be looked for in a far-eastern couple. Where custom requires a wife to follow dutifully in the wake of her husband, whenever the two go out together, there is small opportunity for intercourse by the way, even were there the slightest inclination to it, which there is not. The appearance of the pair on an excursion is a walking satire on socia-



bility, for the comicality of the connection is quite unperceived by the performers. In the privacy of the domestic circle the separation, if less humorous, is no less complete. Each lives in a world of his own, largely separate in fact in China and Korea, and none the less in fancy in Japan. On the continent a friend of the husband would see little or nothing of the wife, and even in Japan he would meet her much as we meet an upper servant in a friend's house. Such a semi-attached relationship does not conduce to much mutual understanding.

The remainder of our hero's uneventful existence calls for no particular comment. As soon as he has children borne him he is raised *ipso facto* from the position of a common soldier to that of a subordinate officer in the family ranks. But his opportunities for the expression of individuality are not one whit increased. He has simply advanced a peg in a regular hierarchy of subjection. From being looked after himself he proceeds to look after others. Such is the extent of the change. Even should he chance to be the eldest son of the eldest son, and thus eventually end by becoming the head of the family, he cannot con-

sistently consider himself. There is absolutely no place in his social cosmos for so particular a thing as the ego.

With a certain grim humor suggestive of metaphysics, it may be said of his whole life that it is nothing but a relative affair after all.

### III.

#### ADOPTION.

BUT one may go a step farther in this matter of the family, and by so doing fare still worse with respect to individuality. There are certain customs in vogue among these peoples which would seem to indicate that even so generic a thing as the family is too personal to serve them for ultimate social atom, and that in fact it is only the idea of the family that is really important, a case of abstraction of an abstract. These suggestive customs are the far-eastern practices of adoption and abdication.

Adoption, with us, is a kind of domestic luxury, akin to the keeping of any other pets, such as lap-dogs and canaries. It is a species of self-indulgence which those who can afford it give themselves when fortune has proved unpropitious, an artificial method of counteracting the inequalities of fate. That such is the plain unglamoured view of

the procedure is shown by the age at which the object is adopted. Usually the future son or daughter enters the adoptive household as an infant, intentionally so on the part of the would-be parents. His ignorance of a previous relationship largely increases his relative value; for the possibility of his making comparisons in his own mind between a former state of existence and the present one unfavorable to the latter is not pleasant for the adopters to contemplate. He is therefore acquired young. The amusement derived from his company is thus seen to be distinctly paramount to all other considerations. No one cares so heartily to own a dog which has been the property of another; *a fortiori* of a child. It is clearly, then, not as a necessity that the babe is adopted. If such were the case, if like the ancient Romans all a man wanted was the continuance of the family line, he would naturally wait until the last practicable moment; for he would thus save both care and expense. In the Far East adoption is quite a different affair. There it is a genealogical necessity — like having a father or mother. It is, indeed, of almost more importance. For the great desidera-



A QUIET HOME

1970

tum to these peoples is not ancestors but descendants. Pedigrees in the land of the universal opposite are not matters of bequest but of posthumous reversion. A man is not beholden to the past, he looks forward to the future for inherited honors. No fame attaches to him for having had an illustrious grandfather. On the contrary, it is the illustrious grandson who reflects some of his own greatness back upon his grandfather. If a man therefore fail to attain eminence himself, he always has another chance in his descendants; for he will of necessity be ennobled through the merits of those who succeed him. Such is the immemorial law of the land. Fame is retroactive. This admirable system has only one objection: it is posthumous in its effect. An ambitious man who unfortunately lacks ability himself has to wait too long for vicarious recognition. The objection is like that incident to the making of a country seat out of a treeless plain by planting the same with saplings. About the time the trees begin to be worth having the proprietary landscape-gardener dies of old age. However, as custom permits a Far Oriental no ancestral growth of timber,

he is obliged to lay the seeds of his own family trees. Natural offspring are on the whole easier to get, and more satisfactory when got. Hence the haste with which these peoples rush into matrimony. If in despite of his precipitation fate perversely refuse to grant him children, he must endeavor to make good the omission by artificial means. He proceeds to adopt somebody. True to instinct, he chooses from preference a collateral relative. In some far-eastern lands he must so restrict himself by law. In Korea, for instance, he can only adopt an agnate and one of a lower generation than his own. But in Japan his choice is not so limited. In so praiseworthy an act as the perpetuation of his unimportant family line, it is deemed unwise in that progressive land to hinder him from unconsciously bettering it by the way. He is consequently permitted to adopt anybody. As people are by no means averse to being adopted, the power to adopt whom he will gives him more voice in the matter of his unnatural offspring than he ever had in the selection of a more natural one.

The adopted changes his name, of course, to take that of the family he enters. As



he is very frequently grown up and extensively known at the time the adoption takes place, his change of cognomen occasions at first some slight confusion among his acquaintance. This would be no worse, however, than the change with us from the maid to the matron, and intercourse would soon proceed smoothly again if people would only rest content with one such domestic migration. But they do not. The fatal facility of the process tempts them to repeat it. The result is bewildering: a people as nomadic now in the property of their persons as their forefathers were in their real estate. A man adopts another to-day to unadopt him to-morrow and replace him by somebody else the day after. So profoundly unimportant to them is their social identity, that they bandy it about with almost farcical freedom. Perhaps it is fitting that there should be some slight preparation in this world for a future transmigration of souls. Still one fails to conceive that the practice can be devoid of disadvantages even to its beneficiaries. To foreigners it proves disastrously perplexing. For if you chance upon a man whom you have not met for some time, you can never

be quite sure how to accost him. If you begin, "Well met, Green, how goes it?" as likely as not he replies, "Finely. But I am no longer Green; I have become Brown. I was adopted last month by my maternal grandfather." You of course apologize for your unfortunate mistake, carefully note his change of hue for a future occasion, and behold, on meeting him the next time you find he has turned Black. Such a chameleon-like cognomen is very unsettling to your idea of his identity, and can hardly prove reassuring to his own. The only persons who reap any benefit from the doubt are those, with us unhappy, individuals who possess the futile faculty of remembering faces without recalling their accompanying names.

Girls, as a rule, are not adopted, being valueless genealogically. A niece or grand-niece to whom one has taken a great fancy might of course be adopted there as elsewhere, but it would be distinctly out of the every-day run, as she could never be included in the household on strict business principles.

The practice of adopting is not confined to childless couples. Others may find them-



THE COLOSSAL JIZŌ

Roll

selves in quite as unfortunate a predicament. A man may be the father of a large and thriving family and yet be as destitute patriarchally as if he had not a child to his name. His offspring may be of the wrong sex; they may all be girls. In this untoward event the father has something more on his hands than merely a houseful of daughters to dispose of. In addition to securing sons-in-law, he must, unless he would have his ancestral line become extinct, provide himself with a son. The simplest procedure in such a case is to combine relationships in a single individual, and the most self-evident person to select for the dual capacity is the husband of the eldest daughter. This is the course pursued. Some worthy young man is secured as spouse for the senior sister; he is at the same time formally taken in as a son by the family whose cognomen he assumes, and eventually becomes the head of the house. Strange to say, this vista of gradually unfolding honors does not seem to prove inviting. Perhaps the new-comer objects to marrying the whole family, a prejudice not without parallel elsewhere. Certainly the opportunity is not appreciated.

Indeed, to "go out as a son-in-law," as the Japanese idiom hath it, is considered demeaning to the matrimonial domestic. Like other household help he wears too patently the badge of servitude. "If you have three koku of rice to your name, don't do it," is the advice of the local proverb — a proverb whose warning against marrying for money is the more suggestive for being launched in a land where marrying for love is beyond the pale of respectability. To barter one's name in this mercenary manner is looked upon as derogatory to one's self-respect, although, as we have seen, to part with it for any less direct remuneration is not attended with the slightest loss of personal prestige. As practically the unfortunate had none to lose in either event, it would seem to be a case of taking away from a man that which he hath not. So contumacious a thing is custom. It is indeed lucky that popular prejudice interposes some limit to this fictitious method of acquiring children. A trifling predilection for the real thing in sonships is absolutely vital, even to the continuance of the artificial variety. For if one generation ever went in exclusively for adoption, there

would be no subsequent generation to adopt.

As if to give the finishing touch to so conventional a system of society, a man can leave it under certain circumstances with even greater ease than he entered it. He can become as good as dead without the necessity of making way with himself. Theoretically, he can cease to live while still practically existing; for it is always open to the head of a family to abdicate.

The word abdicate has to our ears a certain regal sound. We instinctively associate the act with a king. Even the more democratic expression resign suggests at once an office of public or quasi public character. To talk of abdicating one's private relationships sounds absurd; one might as well talk of electing his parents, it would seem to us. Such misunderstanding of far-eastern social possibilities comes from our having indulged in digressions from our more simple nomadic habits. If in imagination we will return to our ancestral muttons and the then existing order of things, the idea will not strike us as so strange; for in those early bucolic days every father was a king. Family econom-

ics were the only political questions in existence then. The clan was the unit. Domestic disputes were state disturbances, and clan-claims the only kind of international quarrels. The patriarch was both father to his people and king.

As time widened the family circle it eventually reached a point where cohesion ceased to be possible. The centrifugal tendency could no longer be controlled by the centripetal force. It split up into separate bodies, each of them a family by itself. In their turn these again divided, and so the process went on. This principle has worked universally, the only difference in its action among different races being the greater or less degree of the evolving motion. With us the social system has been turning more and more rapidly with time. In the Far East its force, instead of increasing, would seem to have decreased, enabling the nebula of its original condition to keep together as a single mass, so that to-day a whole nation, resembling a nebula indeed in homogeneity, is swayed by a single patriarchal principle. Here, on the contrary, so rapid has the motion become that even brethren find themselves scattered to the four winds.



An Occidental father and an Oriental head of a family are no longer really correlative terms. The latter more closely resembles a king in his duties, responsibilities, and functions generally. Now, in the Middle Ages in Europe, when a king grew tired of affairs of state, he abdicated. So in the Far East, when the head of a family has had enough of active life, he abdicates, and his eldest son reigns in his stead.

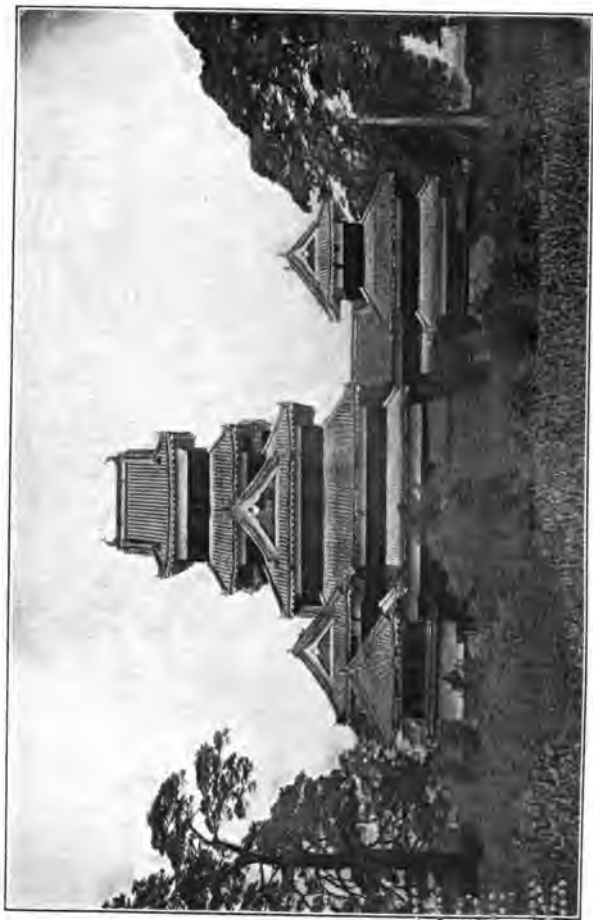
From that moment he ceases to belong to the body politic in any active sense. Not that he is no longer a member of society nor unamenable to its general laws, but that he has become a respectable *déclassé*, as it were. He has entered, so to speak, the social nirvana, a not unfitting first step, as he regards it, toward entering the eventual nirvana beyond. Such abdication now takes place without particular cause. After a certain time of life, and long before a man grows old, it is the fashion thus to make one's bow.

## IV.

### LANGUAGE.

A MAN'S personal equation, as astronomers call the effect of his individuality, is kin, for all its complexity, to those simple algebraical problems which so puzzled us at school. To solve either we must begin by knowing the values of the constants that enter into its expression. Upon the *a b c*'s of the one, as upon those of the other, depend the possibilities of the individual *x*.

Now the constants in any man's equation are the qualities that he has inherited from the past. What a man does follows from what he is, which in turn is mostly dependent upon what his ancestors have been; and of all the links in the long chain of mind-evolution, few are more important and more suggestive than language. Actions may at the moment speak louder than words, but methods of expression have as tell-tale a tongue for bygone times as ways of doing things.



DAIMYO'S CASTLE

1700

If it should ever fall to my lot to have to settle that exceedingly vexed Eastern question, — not the emancipation of ancient Greece from the bondage of the modern Turk, but the emancipation of the modern college student from the bond of ancient Greek, — I should propose, as a solution of the dilemma, the addition of a course in Japanese to the college list of required studies. It might look, I admit, like begging the question for the sake of giving its answer, but the answer, I think, would justify itself.

It is from no desire to parade a fresh hobby-horse upon the university curriculum that I offer the suggestion, but because I believe that a study of the Japanese language would prove the most valuable of ponies in the academic pursuit of philology. In the matter of literature, indeed, we should not be adding very much to our existing store, but we should gain an insight into the genesis of speech that would put us at least one step nearer to being present at the beginnings of human conversation. As it is now, our linguistic learning is with most of us limited to a knowledge of Aryan tongues, and in con-

sequence we not only fall into the mistake of thinking our way the only way, which is bad enough, but, what is far worse, by not perceiving the other possible paths we quite fail to appreciate the advantages or disadvantages of following our own. We are the blind votaries of a species of ancestral language-worship, which, with all its erudition, tends to narrow our linguistic scope. A study of Japanese would free us from the fetters of any such family infatuation. The inviolable rules and regulations of our mother-tongue would be found to be of relative application only. For we should discover that speech is a much less categorical matter than we had been led to suppose. We should actually come to doubt the fundamental necessity of some of our most sacred grammatical constructions; and even our revered Latin grammars would lose that air of awful absoluteness which so impressed us in boyhood.

An encouraging estimate of a certain missionary puts the amount of study needed by the Western student for the learning of Japanese as sufficient, if expended nearer home, to equip him with any three modern

European languages. It is certainly true that a completely strange vocabulary, an utter inversion of grammar, and an elaborate system of honorifics combine to render its acquisition anything but easy. In its fundamental principles, however, it is alluringly simple.

In the first place, the Japanese language is pleasingly destitute of personal pronouns. Not only is the obnoxious "I" conspicuous only by its absence; the objectionable antagonistic "you" is also entirely suppressed, while the intrusive "he" is evidently too much of a third person to be wanted. Such invidious distinctions of identity apparently never thrust their presence upon the simple early Tartar minds. I, you, and he, not being differences due to nature, demanded, to their thinking, no recognition of man.

There is about this vagueness of expression a freedom not without its charm. It is certainly delightful to be able to speak of yourself as if you were somebody else, choosing mentally for the occasion any one you may happen to fancy, or, if you prefer, the possibility of soaring boldly forth into the realms of the unconditioned.

To us, at first sight, however, such a lack of specification appears woefully incompatible with any intelligible transmission of ideas. So communistic a want of discrimination between the *meum* and the *tuum* — to say nothing of the claims of a possible third party — would seem to be as fatal to the interchange of thoughts as it proves destructive to the trafficking in commodities. Such, nevertheless, is not the result. On the contrary, Japanese is as easy and as certain of comprehension as is English. On ninety occasions out of a hundred, the context at once makes clear the person meant.

In the very few really ambiguous cases, or those in which, for the sake of emphasis, a pronoun is wanted, certain consecrated expressions are introduced for the purpose. For eventually the more complex social relations of increasing civilization compelled some sort of distant recognition. Accordingly, compromises with objectionable personality were effected by circumlocutions promoted to a pronoun's office, becoming thus pro-pronouns, as it were. Very non-committal expressions they are, most of them, such as : "the augustness," meaning



you; "that honorable side," or "that corner," denoting some third person, the exact term employed in any given instance scrupulously betokening the relative respect in which the individual spoken of is held; while with a candor, an indefiniteness, or a humility worthy so polite a people, the I is known as "selfishness," or "a certain person," or "the clumsy one."

Pronominal adjectives are manufactured in the same way. "The stupid father," "the awkward son," "the broken-down firm," are "mine." Were they "yours," they would instantly become "the august, venerable father," "the honorable son," "the exalted firm."<sup>1</sup>

Even these lame substitutes for pronouns are paraded as sparingly as possible. To the Western student, who brings to the subject a brain throbbing with personality, hunting in a Japanese sentence for personal references is dishearteningly like "searching in the dark for a black hat *which is n't there*;" for the brevet pronouns are commonly not on duty. To employ them with the reckless prodigality that characterizes

<sup>1</sup> Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain: *The Japanese Language*.

our conversation would strike the Tartar mind like interspersing his talk with unmeaning italics. He would regard such discourse much as we do those effusive epistles of a certain type of young woman to her most intimate girl friends, in which every other word is emphatically underlined.

For the most part, the absolutely necessary personal references are introduced by honorifics; that is, by honorary or humble expressions. Such is a portion of the latter's duty. They do a great deal of unnecessary work besides.

These honorifics are, taken as a whole, one of the most interesting peculiarities of Japanese, as also of Korean, just as, taken in detail, they are one of its most dangerous pitfalls. For silence is indeed golden compared with the chagrin of discovering that a speech which you had meant for a compliment was, in fact, an insult, or the vexation of learning that you have been industriously treating your servant with the deference due a superior, — two catastrophes sure to follow the attempts of even the most cautious of beginners. The language is so thoroughly imbued with the honorific

spirit that the exposure of truth in all its naked simplicity is highly improper. Every idea requires to be more or less clothed in courtesy before it is presentable; and the garb demanded by etiquette is complex beyond conception. To begin with, there are certain preliminary particles which are simply honorific, serving no other purpose whatsoever. In addition to these there are for every action a small infinity of verbs, each sacred to a different degree of respect. For instance, to our verb "to give" corresponds a complete social scale of Japanese verbs, each conveying the idea a shade more politely than its predecessor; only the very lowest meaning anything so plebeian as simply "to give." Sets of laudatory or depreciatory adjectives are employed in the same way. Lastly, the word for "is," which strictly means "exists," expresses this existence under three different forms, — in a matter-of-fact, a flowing, or an inflated style; the solid, liquid, and gaseous states of conversation, so to speak, to suit the person addressed. But three forms being far too few for the needs of so elaborate a politeness, these are supplemented by many interpolated grades.

Terms of respect are applied not only to those mortals who are held in estimation higher than their fellows, but to all men indiscriminately as well. The grammatical attitude of the individual toward the speaker is of as much importance as his social standing, I being beneath contempt, and you above criticism.

Honorifics are used not only on all possible occasions for courtesy, but at times, it would seem, upon impossible ones; for in some instances the most subtle diagnosis fails to reveal in them a relevancy to anybody. That the commonest objects should bear titles because of their connection with some particular person is comprehensible, but what excuse can be made for a phrase like the following, "It respectfully does that the august seat exists," all of which simply means "is," and may be applied to anything, being the common word — in Japanese it is all one word now — for that apparently simple idea. It would seem a sad waste of valuable material. The real reason why so much distinguished consideration is shown the article in question lies in the fact that it is treated as existing with reference to the person addressed, and therefore becomes *ipso facto* august.

Here is a still subtler example. You are, we will suppose, at a tea-house, and you wish for sugar. The following almost stereotyped conversation is pretty sure to take place. I translate it literally, simply prefacing that every tea-house girl, usually in the first blush of youth, is generically addressed as "elder sister," — another honorific, at least so considered in Japan.

You clap your hands. (*Enter tea-house maiden.*)

*You.* Hai, elder sister, augustly exists there sugar?

*The T. H. M.* The honorable sugar, augustly is it?

*You.* So, augustly.

*The T. H. M.* Hè (indescribable expression of assent).

(*Exit tea-house maiden to fetch the sugar.*)

Now, the "augustlies" go almost without saying, but why is the sugar honorable? Simply because it is eventually going to be offered to you. But she would have spoken of it by precisely the same respectful title, if she had been obliged to inform you that there was none, in which case it never could have become yours. Such is polite-

ness. We may note, in passing, that all her remarks and all yours, barring your initial question, meant absolutely nothing. She understood you perfectly from the first, and you knew she did; but then, if all of us were to say only what were necessary, the delightful art of conversation would soon be nothing but a science.

The average Far Oriental, indeed, talks as much to no purpose as his Western cousin, only in his chit-chat politeness replaces personalities. With him, self is suppressed, and an ever-present regard for others is substituted in its stead.

A lack of personality is, as we have seen, the occasion of this courtesy; it is also its cause.

That politeness should be one of the most marked results of impersonality may appear surprising, yet a slight examination will show it to be a fact. Looked at *a posteriori*, we find that where the one trait exists the other is most developed, while an absence of the second seems to prevent the full growth of the first. This is true both in general and in detail. Courtesy increases, as we travel eastward round the world, coincidently with a decrease in the sense of

self. Asia is more courteous than Europe, Europe than America. Particular races show the same concomitance of characteristics. France, the most impersonal nation of Europe, is at the same time the most polite.

Considered *a priori*, the connection between the two is not far to seek. Impersonality, by lessening the interest in one's self, induces one to take an interest in others. Introspection tends to make of man a solitary animal, the absence of it a social one. The more impersonal the people, the more will the community supplant the individual in the popular estimation. The type becomes the interesting thing to man, as it always is to nature. Then, as the social desires develop, politeness, being the means to their enjoyment, develops also.

A second omission in Japanese etymology is that of gender. That words should be credited with sex is a verbal anthropomorphism that would seem to a Japanese exquisitely grotesque, if so be that it did not strike him as actually immodest. For the absence of gender is simply symptomatic of a much more vital failing, a disregard of sex. Originally, as their lan-

guage bears witness, the Japanese showed a childish reluctance to recognizing sex at all. Usually a single sexless term was held sufficient for a given species, and did duty collectively for both sexes. Only where a consideration of sex thrust itself upon them, beyond the possibility of evasion, did they employ for the male and the female distinctive expressions. The more intimate the relation of the object to man, the more imperative the discriminating name. Hence human beings possessed a fair number of such special appellatives; for a man is a palpably different sort of person from his grandmother, and a mother-in-law from a wife. But it is noteworthy that the artificial affinities of society were as carefully differentiated as the distinctions due to sex, while ancestral relationships were deemed more important than either.

Animals, though treated individually most humanely, are vouchsafed but scant recognition on the score of sex. With them, both sexes share one common name, and commonly, indeed, this answers quite well enough. In those few instances where sex enters into the question in a manner not

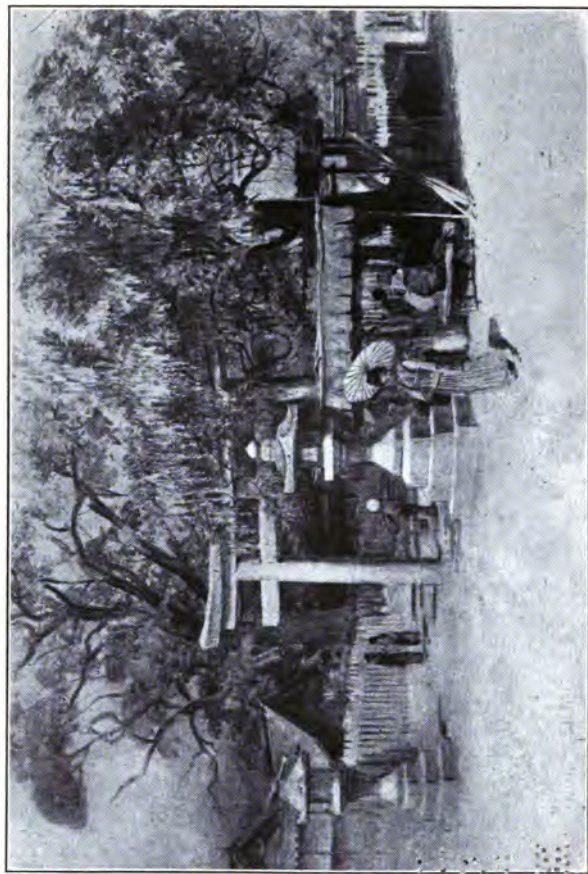


to be ignored, particles denoting "male" or "female" are prefixed to the general term. How comparatively rare is the need of such specification can be seen from the way in which, with us, in many species, the name of one sex alone does duty indifferently for both. That of the male is the one usually selected, as in the case of the dog or horse. If, however, it be the female with which man has most to do, she is allowed to bestow her name upon her male partner. Examples of the latter description occur in the use of "cows" for "cattle," and "hens" for "fowls." A Japanese can say only "fowl," defined, if absolutely necessary, as "he-fowl" or "she-fowl."

Now such a slighting of one of the most potent springs of human action, sex, with all that the idea involves, is not due to a pronounced misogyny on the part of these people, but to a much more effective neglect, a great underlying impersonality. Indifference to woman is but included in a much more general indifference to mankind. The fact becomes all the more evident when we descend from sex to gender. That Father Ocean does not, in their verbal imagery, embrace Mother Earth, with that

subtle suggestion of humanity which in Aryan speech the gender of the nouns hints without expressing, is not due to any lack of poesy in the Far Oriental speaker, but to the essential impersonality of his mind, embodied now in the very character of the words he uses. A Japanese noun is a crystallized concept, handed down unchanged from the childhood of the Japanese race. So primitive a conception does it represent that it is neither a total nor a partial symbol, but rather the outcome of a first vague generality. The word "man," for instance, means to them not one man, still less mankind, but that indefinite idea which struggles for embodiment in the utterance of the infant. It represents not a person, but a thing, a material fact quite innocent of gender. This early state of semi-consciousness the Japanese never outgrew. The world continued to present itself to their minds as a collection of things. Nor did their subsequent Chinese education change their view. Buddhism simply infused all things with the one universal spirit.

As to inanimate objects, the idea of supposing sex where there is not even life is altogether too fanciful a notion for the Far Eastern mind.



WISTARIA BLOSSOMS

1150

Impersonality first fashioned the nouns, and then the nouns, by their very impersonality, helped keep impersonal the thought and fettered fancy. All those temptings to poesy which to the Aryan imagination lie latent in the sex with which his forefathers humanized their words, never stir the Tartar nor the Chinese soul. They feel the poetry of nature as much as, indeed much more than, we; but it is a poetry unassociated with man. And this, too, curiously enough, in spite of the fact that to explain the cosmos the Chinamen invented, or perhaps only adapted, a singularly sexual philosophy. For possibly, like some other portions of their intellectual wealth, they stole it from India. The Chinese conception of the origin of the world is based on the idea of sex. According to their notions the earth was begotten. It is true that with them the cosmos started in an abstract something, which self-produced two great principles; but this pair once obtained, matters proceeded after the analogy of mankind. The two principles at work were themselves abstract enough to have satisfied the most unimpassioned of philosophers. They

were simply a positive essence and a negative one, correlated to sunshine and shadow, but also correlated to male and female forces. Through their mutual action were born the earth and the air and the water; from these, in turn, was begotten man. The cosmical *modus operandi* was not creative nor evolutionary, but sexual. The whole scheme suggests an attempt to wed abstract philosophy with primitive concrete mythology.

The same sexuality distinguishes the Japanese demonology. Here the physical replaces the philosophical; instead of principles we find allegorical personages, but they show just the same pleasing propensity to appear in pairs.

This attributing of sexes to the cosmos is not in the least incompatible with an uninterested disregard of sex where it really exists. It is one thing to admit the fact as a general law of the universe, and quite another to dwell upon it as an important factor in every-day affairs.

How slight is the Tartar tendency to personification can be seen from a glance at these same Japanese gods. They are a combination of defunct ancestors and dei-

fied natural phenomena. The evolving of the first half required little imagination, for fate furnished the material ready made; while in conjuring up the second moiety, the spirit-evokers showed even less originality. Their results were neither winsome nor sublime. The gods whom they created they invested with very ordinary humanity, the usual endowment of aboriginal deity, together with the customary superhuman strength. If these demigods differed from others of their class, it was only in being more commonplace, and in not meddling much with man. Even such personification of natural forces, simple enough to be self-suggested, quickly disappeared. The various awe-compelling phenomena soon ceased to have any connection with the anthropomorphic noumena they had begotten. For instance, the sun-goddess, we are informed, was one day lured out of a cavern, where she was sulking in consequence of the provoking behavior of her younger brother, by her curiosity at the sight of her own face in a mirror, ingeniously placed before the entrance for the purpose. But no Japanese would dream now of casting any such reflections, however flattering,

upon the face of the orb of day. The sun has become not only quite sexless to him, but as devoid of personality as it is to any Western materialist. Lesser deities suffered a like unsubstantial transformation. The thunder-god, with his belt of drums, upon which he beats a devil's tattoo until he is black in the face, is no longer even indirectly associated with the storm. As for dryads and nymphs, the beautiful creatures never inhabited Eastern Asia. Anthropoid foxes and raccoons, wholly lacking in those engaging qualities that beget love, and through love remembrance, take their place. Even Benten, the naturalized Venus, who, like her Hellenic sister, is said to have risen from the sea, is a person quite incapable of inspiring a reckless infatuation.

Utterly unlike was this pantheon to the pantheon of the Greeks, the personifying tendency of whose Aryan mind was forever peopling nature with half-human inhabitants. Under its quickening fancy the very clods grew sentient. Dumb earth awoke at the call of its desire, and the beings its own poesy had begotten made merry companionship for man. Then a



change crept over the face of things. Faith began to flicker, for want of facts to feed its flame. Little by little the fires of devotion burnt themselves out. At last great Pan died. The body of the old belief was consumed. But though it perished, its ashes preserved its form, an unsubstantial presentment of the past, to crumble in a twinkling at the touch of science, but keeping yet to the poet's eye the lifelike semblance of what once had been. The dead gods still live in our language and our art. Even to-day the earth about us seems semi-conscious to the soul, for the memories they have left.

But with the Far Oriental the exorcising feeling was fear. He never fell in love with his own mythological creations, and so he never embalmed their memories. They were to him but explanations of facts, and had no claims upon his fancy. His ideal world remained as utterly impersonal as if it had never been born.

The same impersonality reappears in the matter of number. Grammatically, number with them is unrecognized. There exist no such things as plural forms. This singularity would be only too welcome to

the foreign student, were it not that in avoiding the frying-pan the Tartars fell into the fire. For what they invented in place of a plural was quite as difficult to memorize, and even more cumbrous to express. Instead of inflecting the noun and then prefixing a number, they keep the noun unchanged and add two numerals; thus at times actually employing more words to express the objects than there are objects to express. One of these numerals is a simple number; the other is what is known as an auxiliary numeral, a word as singular in form as in function. Thus, for instance, "two men" become amplified verbally into "man two individual," or, as the Chinaman puts it, in pidgin English, "two piecey man." For in this respect Chinese resembles Japanese, though in very little else, and pidgin English is nothing but the literal translation of the Chinese idiom into Anglo-Saxon words. The necessity for such elaborate qualification arises from the excessive simplicity of the Japanese nouns. As we have seen, the noun is so indefinite a generality that simply to multiply it by a number cannot possibly produce any definite result. No exact coun-

terpart of these nouns exists in English, but some idea of the impossibility of the process may be got from our word "cattle," which, prolific though it may prove in fact, remains obstinately incapable of verbal multiplication. All Japanese nouns being of this indefinite description, all require auxiliary numerals. But as each one has its own appropriate numeral, about which a mistake is unpardonable, it takes some little study merely to master the etiquette of these handles to the names of things.

Nouns are not inflected, their cases being expressed by postpositions, which, as the name implies, follow, in becoming Japanese inversion, instead of preceding the word they affect. To make up, nevertheless, for any lack of perplexity due to an absence of inflections, adjectives, *en revanche*, are most elaborately conjugated. Their protean shapes are as long as they are numerous, representing not only times, but conditions. There are, for instance, the root form, the adverbial form, the indefinite form, the attributive form, and the conclusive form, the two last being conjugated through all the various voices, moods, and tenses, to say nothing of all the poten-

1107 88

tial forms. As one change is superposed on another, the adjective ends by becoming three or four times its original length. The fact is, the adjective is either adjective, adverb, or verb, according to occasion. In the root form it also helps to make nouns; so that it is even more generally useful than as a journalistic epithet with us. As a verb, it does duty as predicate and copula combined. For such an unnecessary part of speech as a real copula does not exist in Japanese. In spite of the shock to the prejudices of the old school of logicians, it must be confessed that the Tartars get on very well without any such couplings to their trains of thought. But then we should remember that in their sentences the cart is always put before the horse, and so needs only to be pushed, not pulled along.

The want of a copula is another instance of the primitive character of the tongue. It has its counterpart in our own baby-talk, where a quality is predicated of a thing simply by placing the adjective in apposition with the noun.

That the Japanese word which is commonly translated "is" is in no sense a

M. H. U.

copula, but an ordinary intransitive verb, referring to a natural state, and not to a logical condition, is evident in two ways. In the first place, it is never used to predicate a quality directly. A Japanese does not say, "The scenery is fine," but simply, "Scenery, fine." Secondly, wherever this verb is indirectly employed in such a manner, it is followed, not by an adjective, but by an adverb. Not "She is beautiful," but "She exists beautifully," would be the Japanese way of expressing his admiration. What looks at first, therefore, like a copula turns out to be merely an impersonal intransitive verb.

A negative noun is, of course, an impossibility in any language, just as a negative substantive, another name for the same thing, is a direct contradiction in terms. No matter how negative the idea to be given, it must be conveyed by a positive expression. Even a void is grammatically quite full of meaning, although unhappily empty in fact. So much is common to all tongues, but Japanese carries its positivism yet further. Not only has it no negative nouns, it has not even any negative pronouns nor pronominal adjectives, —

those convenient keepers of places for the absent. "None" and "nothing" are unknown words in its vocabulary, because the ideas they represent are not founded on observed facts, but upon metaphysical abstractions. Such terms are human-born, not earth-begotten concepts, and so to the Far Oriental, who looks at things from the point of view of nature, not of man, negation takes another form. Usually it is introduced by the verbs, because the verbs, for the most part, relate to human actions, and it is man, not nature, who is responsible for the omission in question. After all, it does seem more fitting to say, "I am ignorant of everything," than "I know nothing." It is indeed you who are wanting, not the thing.

The question of verbs leads us to another matter bearing on the subject of impersonality; namely, the arrangement of the words in a Japanese sentence. The Tartar mode of grammatical construction is very nearly the inverse of our own. The fundamental rule of Japanese syntax is, that qualifying words precede the words they qualify; that is, an idea is elaborately modified before it is so much as expressed.

This practice places the hearer at some awkward preliminary disadvantage, inasmuch as the story is nearly over before he has any notion what it is all about; but really it puts the speaker to much more trouble, for he is obliged to fashion his whole sentence complete in his brain before he starts to speak. This is largely in consequence of two omissions in Tartar etymology. There are in Japanese no relative pronouns and no temporal conjunctions; conjunctions, that is, for connecting consecutive events. The want of these words precludes the admission of afterthoughts. Postscripts in speech are impossible. The functions of relatives are performed by position, explanatory or continuative clauses being made to precede directly the word they affect. Ludicrous anachronisms, not unlike those experienced by Alice in her looking-glass journey, are occasioned by this practice. For example, "The merry monarch who ended by falling a victim to profound melancholia" becomes "To profound melancholia a victim by falling ended merry monarch," and the sympathetic hearer weeps first and laughs afterward, when chronologically he should be doing precisely the opposite.

A like inversion of the natural order of things results from the absence of temporal conjunctions. In Japanese, though nouns can be added, actions cannot; you can say "hat and coat," but not "dressed and came." Conjunctions are used only for space, never for time. Objects that exist together can be joined in speech, but it is not allowable thus to connect consecutive events. "Having dressed, came" is the Japanese idiom. To speak otherwise would be to violate the unities. For a Japanese sentence is a single rounded whole, not a bunch of facts loosely tied together. It is as much a unit in its composition as a novel or a drama is with us. Such artistic periods, however, are anything but convenient. In their nicely contrived involution they strikingly resemble those curious nests of Chinese boxes, where entire shells lie closely packed one within another, — a very marvel of ingenious and perfectly unnecessary construction. One must be antipodally comprehensive to entertain the idea; as it is, the idea entertains us.

On the same general plan, the nouns precede the verbs in the sentence, and are in every way the more important parts of



speech. The consequence is that in ordinary conversation the verbs come so late in the day that they not infrequently get left out altogether. For the Japanese are much given to docking their phrases, a custom the Germans might do well to adopt. Now, nouns denote facts, while verbs express action, and action, as considered in human speech, is mostly of human origin. In this precedence accorded the impersonal element in language over the personal, we observe again the comparative importance assigned the two. In Japanese estimation, the first place belongs to nature, the second only to man.

As if to mark beyond a doubt the insignificance of the part man plays in their thought, sentences are usually subjectless. Although it is a common practice to begin a phrase with the central word of the idea, isolated from what follows by the emphasizing particle "wa" (which means "as to," the French "quant à"), the word thus singled out for distinction is far more likely to be the object of the sentence than its subject. The habit is analogous to the use of our phrase "speaking of," — that is, simply an emphatic mode of introducing a

fresh thought; only that with them, the practice being the rule and not the exception, no correspondingly abrupt effect is produced by it. Ousted thus from the post of honor, the subject is not even permitted the second place. Indeed, it usually fails to put in an appearance anywhere. You may search through sentence after sentence without meeting with the slightest suggestion of such a thing. When so unusual an anomaly as a motive cause is directly adduced, it owes its mention, not to the fact of being the subject, but because for other reasons it happens to be the important word of the thought. The truth is, the Japanese conception of events is only very vaguely subjective. An action is looked upon more as happening than as being performed, as impersonally rather than personally produced. The idea is due, however, to anything but philosophic profundity. It springs from the most superficial of childish conceptions. For the Japanese mind is quite the reverse of abstract. Its consideration of things is concrete to a primitive degree. The language reflects the fact. The few abstract ideas these people now possess are not repre-

sented, for the most part, by pure Japanese, but by imported Chinese expressions. The islanders got such general notions from their foreign education, and they imported idea and word at the same time.

Summing up, as it were, *in propria persona* the impersonality of Japanese speech, the word for "man," "hito," is identical with, and probably originally the same word as "hito," the numeral "one;" a noun and a numeral, from which Aryan languages have coined the only impersonal pronoun they possess. On the one hand, we have the German "mann;" on the other, the French "on." While as if to give the official seal to the oneness of man with the universe, the word *mono*, thing, is applied, without the faintest implication of insult, to men.

Such, then, is the mould into which, as children, these people learn to cast their thought. What an influence it must exert upon their subsequent views of life we have but to ask of our own memories to know. With each one of us, if we are to advance beyond the steps of the last generation, there comes a time when our growing ideas refuse any longer to fit the child-

ish grooves in which we were taught to let them run. How great the wrench is when this supreme moment arrives we have all felt too keenly ever to forget. We hesitate, we delay, to abandon the beliefs which, dating from the dawn of our being, seem to us even as a part of our very selves. From the religion of our mother to the birth of our boyish first love, all our early associations send down roots so deep that long after our minds have outgrown them our hearts refuse to give them up. Even when reason conquers at last, sentiment still throbs at the voids they necessarily have left.

In the Far East, this fondness for the old is further consecrated by religion. The worship of ancestors sets its seal upon the traditions of the past, to break which were impious as well as sad. The golden age, that time when each man himself was young, has lingered on in the lands where it is always morning, and where man has never passed to his prosaic noon. Befitting the place is the mind we find there. As its language so clearly shows, it still is in that early impersonal state to which we all awake first before we become aware of that something we later know so well as self.

Particularly potent with these people is their language, for a reason that also lends it additional interest to us, — because it is their own. Among the mass of foreign thought the Japanese imitativeness has caused the nation to adopt, here is one thing which is indigenous. Half of the present speech, it is true, is of Chinese importation, but conservatism has kept the other half pure. From what it reveals we can see how each man starts to-day with the same impersonal outlook upon life the race had reached centuries ago, and which it has since kept unchanged. The man's mind has done likewise.

## V.

### NATURE AND ART.

WE have seen how impersonal is the form which Far Eastern thought assumes when it crystallizes into words. Let us turn now to a consideration of the thoughts themselves before they are thus stereotyped for transmission to others, and scan them as they find expression unconsciously in the man's doings, or seek it consciously in his deeds.

To the Far Oriental there is one subject which so permeates and pervades his whole being as to be to him, not so much a conscious matter of thought as an unconscious mode of thinking. For it is a thing which shapes all his thoughts instead of constituting the substance of one particular set of them. That subject is art. To it he is born as to a birthright. Artistic perception is with him an instinct to which he intuitively conforms, and for which he inherits the skill of countless generations.



A JAPANESE GARDEN

2700



From the tips of his fingers to the tips of his toes, in whose use he is surprisingly proficient, he is the artist all over. Admirable, however, as is his manual dexterity, his mental altitude is still more to be admired; for it is artistic to perfection. His perception of beauty is as keen as his comprehension of the cosmos is crude; for while with science he has not even a speaking acquaintance, with art he is on terms of the most affectionate intimacy.

To the whole Far Eastern world science is a stranger. Such nescience is patent even in matters seemingly scientific. For although the Chinese civilization, even in the so-called modern inventions, was already old while ours lay still in the cradle, it was to no scientific spirit that its discoveries were due. Notwithstanding the fact that Cathay was the happy possessor of gunpowder, movable type, and the compass before such things were dreamt of in Europe, she owed them to no knowledge of physics, chemistry, or mechanics. It was as arts, not as sciences, they were invented. And it speaks volumes for her civilization that she burnt her powder for fireworks, not for firearms. To the West alone be-

longs the credit of manufacturing that article for the sake of killing people instead of merely killing time.

The scientific is not the Far Oriental point of view. To wish to know the reasons of things, that irrepressible yearning of the Western spirit, is no characteristic of the Chinaman's mind, nor is it a Tartar trait. Metaphysics, a species of speculation that has usually proved peculiarly attractive to mankind, probably from its not requiring any scientific capital whatever, would seem the most likely place to seek it. But upon such matters he has expended no imagination of his own, having quietly taken on trust from India what he now professes. As for science proper, it has reached at his hands only the quasi-morphologic stage; that is, it consists of catalogues concocted according to the ingenuity of the individual and resembles the real thing about as much as a haphazard arrangement of human bones might be expected to resemble a man. Not only is the spirit of the subject left out altogether, but the mere outward semblance is misleading. For pseudo-scientific collections of facts which never rise to be classifications

of phenomena forms to his idea the acme of erudition. His mathematics, for example, consists of a set of empiric rules, of which no explanation is ever vouchsafed the taught for the simple reason that it is quite unknown to the teacher. It is not even easy to decide how much of what there is is Jesuitical. Of more recent sciences he has still less notion, particularly of the natural ones. Physics, chemistry, geology, and the like are matters that have never entered his head. Even in studies more immediately connected with obvious everyday life, such as language, history, customs, it is truly remarkable how little he possesses the power of generalization and inference. His elaborate lists of facts are imposing typographically, but are not even formally important, while his reasoning about them is as exquisite a bit of scientific satire as could well be imagined.

But with the arts it is quite another matter. While you will search in vain, in his civilization, for explanations of even the most simple of nature's laws, you will meet at every turn with devices for the beautifying of life, which may stand not unworthily beside the products of nature's own skill.

Whatever these people fashion, from the toy of an hour to the triumphs of all time, is touched by a taste unknown elsewhere. To stroll down the *Broadway* of Tokio of an evening is a liberal education in everyday art. As you enter it there opens out in front of you a fairy-like vista of illumination. Two long lines of gayly lighted shops, stretching off into the distance, look out across two equally endless rows of torch-lit booths, the decorous yellow gleam of the one contrasting strangely with the demoniacal red flare of the other. This perspective of pleasure fulfils its promise. As your feet follow your eyes you find yourself in a veritable shoppers' paradise, the galaxy of twinkle resolving into worlds of delight. Nor do you long remain a mere spectator; for the shops open their arms to you. No cold glass reveals their charms only to shut you off. Their wares lie invitingly exposed to the public, seeming to you already half your own. At the very first you come to you stop involuntarily, lost in admiration over what you take to be bric-a-brac. It is only afterwards you learn that the object of your ecstasy was the commonest of kitchen crockery. Next

door you halt again, this time in front of some leathern pocket-books, stamped with designs in color to tempt you instantly to empty your wallet for more new ones than you will ever have the means to fill. If you do succeed in tearing yourself away purse-whole, it is only to fall a victim to some painted fans of so exquisite a make and decoration that escape short of possession is impossible. Opposed as stubbornly as you may be to idle purchase at home, here you will find yourself the prey of an acute case of shopping fever before you know it. Nor will it be much consolation subsequently to discover that you have squandered your patrimony upon the most ordinary articles of every-day use. If in despair you turn for refuge to the booths, you will but have delivered yourself into the embrace of still more irresistible fascinations. For the nocturnal squatters are there for the express purpose of catching the susceptible. The shops were modestly attractive from their nature, but the booths deliberately make eyes at you, and with telling effect. The very atmosphere is bewitching. The lurid smurkinness of the torches lends an appropriate weirdness to

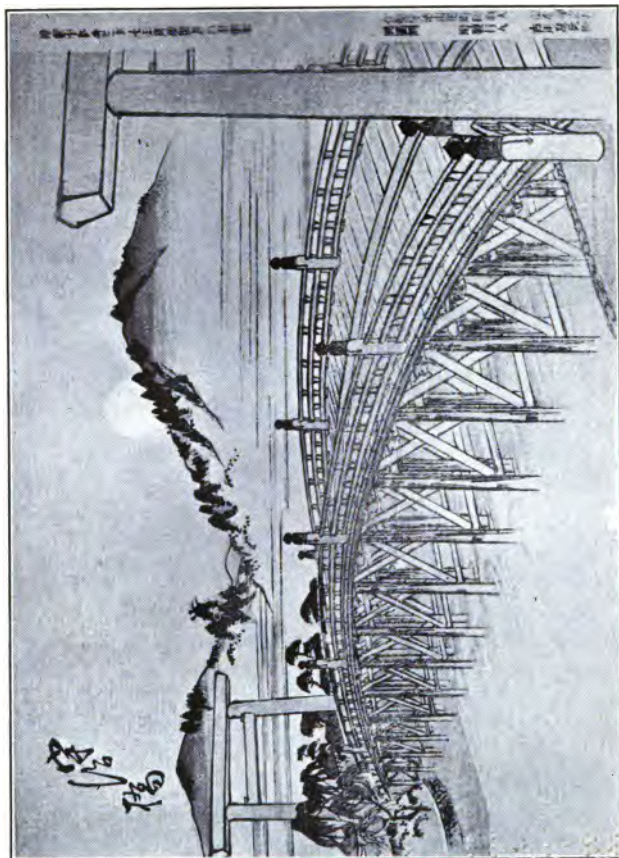
the figure of the uncouthly clad pedlar who, with the politeness of the arch-fiend himself, displays to an eager group the fatal fascinations of some new conceit. Here the latest thing in inventions, a gutta-percha rat, which, for reasons best known to the vender, scampers about squeaking with a mimicry to shame the original, holds an admiring crowd spellbound with mingled trepidation and delight. There a native zoetrope, indefatigable round of pleasure, whose top fashioned after the type of a turbine wheel enables a candle at the centre ingeniously to supply both illumination and motive power at the same time, affords to as many as can find room on its circumference a peep at the composite antics of a consecutively pictured monkey in the act of jumping a box. Beyond this "wheel of life" lies spread out on a mat a most happy family of curios, the whole of which you are quite prepared to purchase *en bloc*. While a little farther on stands a flower show which seems to be coyly beckoning to you as the blossoms nod their heads to an imperceptible breeze. So one attraction fairly jostles its neighbor for recognition from the gay thousands that like yourself

stroll past in holiday delight. Chattering children in brilliant colors, voluble women and talkative men in quieter but no less picturesque costumes, stream on in kaleidoscopic continuity. And you, carried along by the current, wander thus for miles with the tide of pleasure-seekers, till, late at night, when at last you turn reluctantly homeward, you feel as one does when wakened from some too delightful dream.

Or instead of night, suppose it day and the place a temple. With those who are entering you enter too through the outer gateway into the courtyard. At the farther end rises a building the like of which for richness of effect you have probably never beheld or even imagined. In front of you a flight of white stone steps leads up to a terrace whose parapet, also of stone, is diapered for half its height and open lattice-work the rest. This piazza gives entrance to a building or set of buildings whose every detail challenges the eye. Twelve pillars of snow-white wood sheathed in part with bronze, arranged in four rows, make, as it were, the bones of the structure. The space between the centre column lies open. The other triplets are webbed in the middle and

connected, on the sides and front, by grilles of wood and bronze forming on the outside a couple of embrasures on either hand the entrance in which stand the guardian Nio, two colossal demons, Gog and Magog. Instead of capitals, a frieze bristling with Chinese lions protects the top of the pillars. Above this in place of entablature rises tier upon tier of decoration, each tier projecting beyond the one beneath, and the topmost of all terminating in a balcony which encircles the whole second story. The parapet of this balcony is one mass of ornament, and its cornice another row of lions, brown instead of white. The second story is no less crowded with carving. Twelve pillars make its ribs, the spaces between being filled with elaborate woodwork, while on top rest more friezes, more cornices, clustered with excrescences of all colors and kinds, and guarded by lions innumerable. To begin to tell the details of so multi-faceted a gem were artistically impossible. It is a jewel of a thousand rays, yet whose beauties blend into one as the prismatic tints combine to white. And then, after the first dazzle of admiration, when the spirit of curiosity urges you to penetrate the centre aisle,





JAPANESE BRIDGE

WnoU

lo and behold it is but a gate! The dupe of unexpected splendor, you have been paying court to the means of approach. It is only a portal after all. For as you pass through, you catch a glimpse of a building beyond more gorgeous still. Like in general to the first, unlike it in detail, resembling it only as the mistress may the maid. But who shall convince of charm by enumerating the features of a face! From the tiles of its terrace to the encrusted gables that drape it as with some rich bejewelled mantle falling about it in the most graceful of folds, it is the very eastern princess of a building standing in the majesty of her court to give you audience.

A pebbly path, a low flight of stone steps, a pause to leave your shoes without the sill, and you tread in the twilight of reverence upon the moss-like mats within. The richness of its outer ornament, so impressive at first, is, you discover, but prelude to the lavish luxury of its interior. Lacquer, bronze, pigments, deck its ceiling and its sides in such profusion that it seems to you as if art had expanded, in the congenial atmosphere, into a tropical luxuriance of decoration, and grew here as naturally

on temples as in the jungle creepers do on trees. Yet all is but setting to what the place contains; objects of bigotry and virtue that appeal to the artistic as much as to the religious instincts of the devout. More sacred still are the things treasured in the sanctum of the priests. There you will find gems of art for whose sake only the most abnormal impersonality can prevent you from breaking the tenth commandment. Of the value set upon them you can form a distant approximation from the exceeding richness and the amazing number of the silk cloths and lacquered boxes in which they are so religiously kept. As you gaze thus, amid the soul-satisfying repose of the spot, at some masterpiece from the brush of Motonobu, you find yourself wondering, in a fanciful sort of way, whether Buddhist contemplation is not after all only another name for the contemplation of the beautiful, since devotees to the one are *ex officio* such votaries of the other.

Dissimilar as are these two glimpses of Japanese existence, in one point the bustling street and the hushed temple are alike,—in the nameless grace that beautifies both.

This spirit is even more remarkable for its

all-pervasiveness than for its inherent excellence. Both objectively and subjectively its catholicity is remarkable. It imbues everything, and affects everybody. So universally is it applied to the daily affairs of life that there may be said to be no mechanical arts in Japan simply because all such have been raised to the position of fine arts. The lowest artisan is essentially an artist. Modern French nomenclature on the subject, in spite of the satire to which the more prosaic Anglo-Saxon has subjected it, is peculiarly applicable there. To call a Japanese cook, for instance, an artist would be but the barest acknowledgment of fact, for Japanese food is far more beautiful to look at than agreeable to eat; while Tokio tailors are certainly masters of drapery, if they are sublimely oblivious to the natural modelings of the male or female form.

On the other hand, art is sown, like the use of tobacco, broadcast among the people. It is the birthright of the Far East, the talent it never hides. Throughout the length and breadth of the land, and from the highest prince to the humblest peasant, art reigns supreme.

Now such a prevalence of artistic feeling

implies of itself impersonality in the people. At first sight it might seem as if science did the same, and that in this respect the one hemisphere offset the other, and that consequently both should be equally impersonal. But in the first place, our masses are not imbued with the scientific spirit, as theirs are with artistic sensibility. Who would expect of a mason an impersonal interest in the principles of the arch, or of a plumber a non-financial devotion to hydraulics? Certainly one would be wrong in crediting the masses in general or European waiters in particular with much abstract love of mathematics, for example. In the second place, there is an essential difference in the attitude of the two subjects upon personality. Emotionally, science appeals to nobody, art to everybody. Now the emotions constitute the larger part of that complex bundle of ideas which we know as self. A thought which is not tinged to some extent with feeling is not only not personal; properly speaking, it is not even distinctively human, but cosmical. In its lofty superiority to man, science is unpersonal rather than impersonal. Art, on the other hand, is a familiar spirit. Through the win-

dows of the senses she finds her way into the very soul of man, and makes for herself a home there. But it is to his humanity, not to his individuality, that she whispers, for she speaks in that universal tongue which all can understand.

Examples are not wanting to substantiate theory. It is no mere coincidence that the two most impersonal nations of Europe and Asia respectively, the French and the Japanese, are at the same time the most artistic. Even politeness, which, as we have seen, distinguishes both, is itself but a form of art,—the social art of living agreeably with one's fellows.

This impersonality comes out with all the more prominence when we pass from the consideration of art in itself to the spirit which actuates that art, and especially when we compare their spirit with our own. The mainsprings of Far Eastern art may be said to be three: Nature, Religion, and Humor. Incongruous collection that they are, all three witness to the same trait. For the first typifies concrete impersonality, the second abstract impersonality, while the province of the last is to ridicule personality generally. Of the trio the first

is altogether the most important. Indeed, to a Far Oriental, so fundamental a part of himself is his love of Nature that before we view its mirrored image it will be well to look the emotion itself in the face. The Far Oriental lives in a long day-dream of beauty. He muses rather than reasons, and all musing, so the word itself confesses, springs from the inspiration of a Muse. But this Muse appears not to him, as to the Greeks, after the fashion of a woman, nor even more prosaically after the likeness of a man. Unnatural though it seem to us, his inspiration seeks no human symbol. His Muse is not kin to mankind. She is too impersonal for any personification, for she is Nature.

That poet whose name carries with it a certain presumption of infallibility has told us that "the proper study of mankind is man;" and if material advancement in consequence be any criterion of the fitness of a particular mental pursuit, events have assuredly justified the saying. Indeed, the Levant has helped antithetically to preach the same lesson, in showing us by its own fatal example that the improper study of mankind is woman, and that they who but follow the fair will inevitably degenerate.





THE OLEANDER

Mr. U

The Far Oriental knows nothing of either study, and cares less. The delight of self-exploration, or the possibly even greater delight of losing one's self in trying to fathom femininity, is a sensation equally foreign to his temperament. Neither the remarkable persistence of one's own characteristics, not infrequently matter of deep regret to their possessor, nor the charmingly unaccountable variability of the fairer sex, at times quite as annoying, is a phenomenon sufficient to stir his curiosity. Accepting, as he does, the existing state of things more as a material fact than as a phase in a gradual process of development, he regards humanity as but a small part of the great natural world, instead of considering it the crowning glory of the whole. He recognizes man merely as a fraction of the universe, — one might almost say as a vulgar fraction of it, considering the low regard in which he is held, — and accords him his proportionate share of attention, and no more.

In his thought, nature is not accessory to man. Worthy M. Périchon, of prosaic, not to say philistine fame, had, as we remember, his travels immortalized in a painting

where a colossal Périclion in front almost completely eclipsed a tiny Mont Blanc behind. A Far Oriental *thinks* poetry, which may possibly account for the fact that in his mind-pictures the relative importance of man and mountain stands reversed. "The matchless Fuji," first of *motifs* in his art, admits no pilgrim as its peer.

Nor is it to woman that turn his thoughts. Mother Earth is fairer, in his eyes, than are any of her daughters. To her is given the heart that should be theirs. The Far Eastern love of Nature amounts almost to a passion. To the study of her ever varying moods her Japanese admirer brings an impersonal adoration that combines oddly the æstheticism of a poet with the asceticism of a recluse. Not that he worships in secret, however. His passion is too genuine either to find disguise or seek display. With us, unfortunately, the love of Nature is apt to be considered a mental extravagance peculiar to poets, excusable in exact ratio to the ability to give it expression. For an ordinary mortal to feel a fondness for Mother Earth is a kind of folly, to be carefully concealed from his fellows. A sort of shamefacedness prevents him from



CHRYSANTHEMUMS

1700

avowing it, as a boy at boarding-school hides his homesickness, or a lad his love. He shrinks from appearing less pachydermatous than the rest. Or else he flies to the other extreme, and affects the odd; pretends, poses, parades, and at last succeeds half in duping himself, half in deceiving other people. But with Far Orientals the case is different. Their love has all the unostentatious assurance of what has received the sanction of public opinion. Nor is it still at that doubtful, hesitating stage when, by the instrumentality of a third, its soul-harmony can suddenly be changed from the jubilant major key into the despairing minor. No trace of sadness tinges his delight. He has long since passed this melancholy phase of erotic misery, if so be that the course of his true love did not always run smooth, and is now well on in matrimonial bliss. The very look of the land is enough to betray the fact. In Japan the landscape has an air of domesticity about it, patent even to the most casual observer. Wherever the Japanese has come in contact with the country he has made her unmistakably his own. He has touched her to caress, not injure, and

it seems as if Nature accepted his fondness as a matter of course, and yielded him a wifely submission in return. His garden is more human, even, than his house. Not only is everything exquisitely in keeping with man, but natural features are actually changed, plastic to the imprint of their lord and master's mind. Bushes, shrubs, trees, forget to follow their original intent, and grow as he wills them to; now expanding in wanton luxuriance, now contracting into dwarf designs of their former selves, all to obey his caprice and please his eye. Even stubborn rocks lose their wildness, and come to seem a part of the almost sentient life around them. If the description of such dutifulness seems fanciful, the thing itself surpasses all supposition. Hedges and shrubbery, clipped into the most fantastic shapes, accept the suggestion of the pruning-knife as if man's wishes were their own whims. Manikin maples, Tom Thumb trees, a foot high and thirty years old, with all the gnarls and knots and knuckles of their fellows of the forest, grow in his parterres, their native vitality not a whit diminished. And they are not regarded as monstrosities but only



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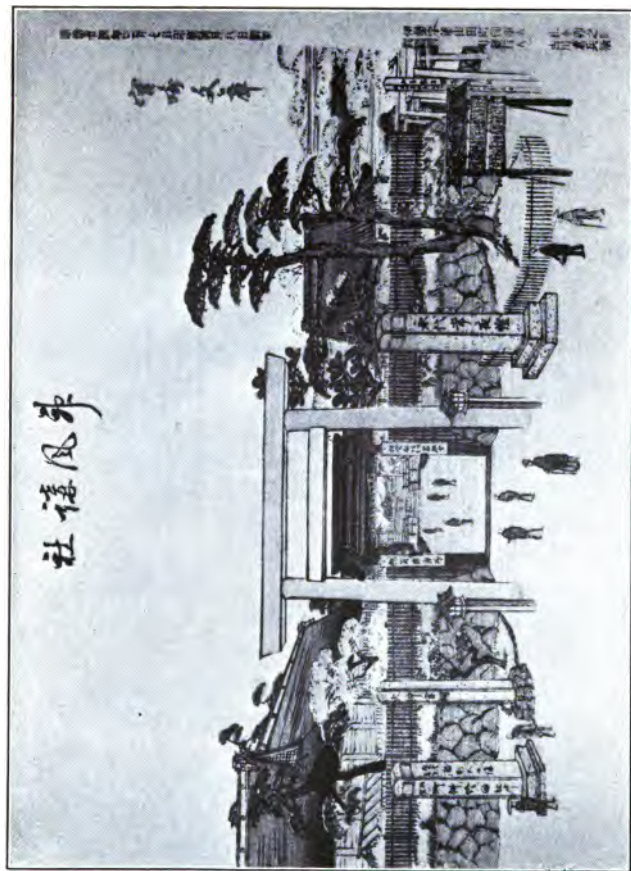
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as the most natural of artificialities; for they are a part of a horticultural whole. To walk into a Japanese garden is like wandering of a sudden into one of those strange worlds we see reflected in the polished surface of a concave mirror, where all but the observer himself is transformed into a fantastic miniature of the reality. In that quaint fairyland diminutive rivers flow gracefully under tiny trees, past mole-hill mountains, till they fall at last into lilliputian lakes, almost smothered for the flowers that grow upon their banks; while in the extreme distance of a couple of rods the cone of a *Fuji* ten feet high looks approvingly down upon a scene which would be nationally incomplete without it.

But besides the delights of domesticity which the Japanese enjoys daily in Nature's company, he has his *accès de tendresse*, too. When he feels thus specially stirred, he invites a chosen few of his friends, equally infatuated, and together they repair to some spot noted for its scenery. It may be a waterfall, or some dreamy pond overhung by trees, or the distant glimpse of a mountain peak framed in picture-wise between the nearer hills; or, at their appro-

priate seasons, the blossoming of the many tree flowers, which in eastern Asia are beautiful beyond description. For he appreciates not only places, but times. One spot is to be seen at sunrise, another by moonlight; one to be visited in the spring-time, another in the fall. But wherever or whenever it be, a tea-house, placed to command the best view of the sight, stands ready to receive him. For nature's beauties are too well recognized to remain the exclusive property of the first chance lover. People flock to view nature as we do to see a play, and privacy is as impossible as it is unsought. Indeed, the aversion to publicity is simply a result of the sense of self, and therefore necessarily not a feature of so impersonal a civilization. *Æsthetic* guidebooks are written for the nature-enamoured, descriptive of these views which the Japanese translator quaintly calls "Sceneries," and which visitors come not only from near but from far to gaze upon. In front of the tea-house proper are rows of summer pavilions, in one of which the party make themselves at home, while gentle little tea-house girls toddle forth to serve them the invariable preliminary tea



社議風亭

IN JAPAN

1701

and confections. Each man then produces from up his sleeve, or from out his girdle, paper, ink, and brush, and proceeds to compose a poem on the beauty of the spot and the feelings it calls up, which he subsequently reads to his admiring companions. Hot *sake* is next served, which is to them what beer is to a German or absinthe to a *blouse*; and there they sit, sip, and poetize, passing their couplets, as they do their cups, in honor to one another. At last, after drinking in an hour or two of scenery and sake combined, the symposium of poets breaks up.

Sometimes, instead of a company of friends, a man will take his family, wife, babies, and all, on such an outing, but the details of his holiday are much the same as before. For the scenery is still the centre of attraction, and in the attendant creature comforts Far Eastern etiquette permits an equal enjoyment to man, woman, and child.

This love of nature is quite irrespective of social condition. All classes feel its force, and freely indulge the feeling. Poor as well as rich, low as well as high, contrive to gratify their poetic instincts for natural scenery. As for flowers, especially

tree flowers, or those of the larger plants, like the lotus or the iris, the Japanese appreciation of their beauty is as phenomenal as is that beauty itself. Those who can afford the luxury possess the shrubs in private; those who cannot, feast their eyes on the public specimens. From a sprig in a vase to a park planted on purpose, there is no part of them too small or too great to be excluded from Far Oriental affection. And of the two "drawing-rooms" of the Mikado held every year, in April and November, both are garden-parties: the one given at the time and with the title of "the cherry blossoms," and the other of "the chrysanthemum."

These same tree flowers deserve more than a passing notice, not simply because of their amazing beauty, which would arrest attention anywhere, but for the national attitude toward them. For no better example of the Japanese passion for nature could well be cited. If the anniversaries of people are slightly treated in the land of the sunrise, the same cannot be said of plants. The yearly birthdays of the vegetable world are observed with more than botanic enthusiasm. The regard in which they are



held is truly emotional, and if not actually individual in its object, at least personal to the species. Each kind of tree as its season brings it into flower is made the occasion of a festival. For the beauty of the blossoming receives the tribute of a national admiration. From peers to populace mankind turns out to witness it. Nor are these occasions few. Spring in the Far East is one long chain of flower fêtes, and as spring begins by the end of January and lasts till the middle of June, opportunities for appreciating each in turn are not half spoiled by a common contemporaneity. People have not only occasion but time to admire. Indeed, spring itself is suitably respected by being dated conformably to fact. Far Orientals begin their year when Nature begins hers, instead of starting anachronously as we do in the very middle of the dead season, much as our colleges hold their commencements, on the last in place of on the first day of the academic term. So previous has the haste of Western civilization become. The result is that our rejoicing partakes of the incongruity of humor. The new year exists only in name. In the Far East, on

the other hand, the calendar is made to fit the time. Men begin to reckon their year some three weeks later than the Western world, just as the plum-tree opens its pink white petals, as it were, in rosy reflection of the snow that lies yet upon the ground. But the coldness of the weather does not in the least deter people from thronging the spot in which the trees grow, where they spend hours in admiration, and end by pinning appropriate poems on the twigs for later comers to peruse. Fleeting as the flowers are in fact, they live forever in fancy. For they constitute one of the commonest motifs of both painting and poetry. A branch just breaking into bloom seen against the sunrise sky, or a bough bending its blossoms to the bosom of a stream, is subject enough for their greatest masters, who thus wed, as it were, two arts in one, — the spirit of poesy with pictorial form. This plum-tree is but a blossom. Precocious harbinger of a host of flowers, its gay heralding over, it vanishes not to be recalled, for it bears no edible fruit.

The next event in the series might fairly be called phenomenal. Early in April takes place what is perhaps as superb a sight as



PINNING A POEM ON THE TREE

1701

anything in this world, the blossoming of the cherry-trees. Indeed, it is not easy to do the thing justice in description. If the plum invited admiration, the cherry commands it; for to see the *sakura* in flower for the first time is to experience a new sensation. Familiar as a man may be with cherry blossoms at home, the sight there bursts upon him with the dazzling effect of a revelation. Such is the profusion of flowers that the tree seems to have turned into a living mass of rosy light. No leaves break the brilliance. The snowy-pink petals drape the branches entirely, yet so delicately, one deems it all a veil donned for the tree's nuptials with the spring. For nothing could more completely personify the spirit of the springtime. You can almost fancy it some dryad decked for her bridal, in maidenly day-dreaming too lovely to last. For like the plum the cherry fails in its fruit to fulfil the promise of its flower.

It would be strange indeed if so much beauty received no recognition, but it is even more strange that recognition should be so complete and so universal as it is. Appreciation is not confined to the culti-

vated few; it is shown quite as enthusiastically by the masses. The popularity of the plants is all-embracing. The common people are as sensitive to their beauty as are the upper classes. Private gratification, roseate as it is, pales beside the public delight. Indeed, not content with what revelation Nature makes of herself of her own accord, man has multiplied her manifestations. Spots suitable to their growth have been peopled by him with trees. Sometimes they stand in groups like star-clusters, as in Oji, crowning a hill; sometimes, as at Mukojima, they line an avenue for miles, dividing the blue river on the one hand from the blue-green rice-fields on the other, — a floral milky way of light. But wherever the trees may be, there at their flowering season are to be found throngs of admirers. For in crowds people go out to see the sight, multitudes streaming incessantly to and fro beneath their blossoms as the time of day determines the turn of the human tide. To the Occidental stranger such a gathering suggests some social loadstone; but none exists. In the cherry-trees alone lies the attraction.

For one week out of the fifty-two the



IN CHERRY BLOSSOM TIME

Mr. O



cherry-tree stands thus glorified, a vision of beauty prolonged somewhat by the want of synchronousness of the different kinds. Then the petals fall. What was a nuptial veil becomes a winding-sheet, covering the sod as with winter's winding-sheet of snow, destined itself to disappear, and the tree is nothing but a common cherry-tree once more.

But flowers are by no means over because the cherry blossoms are past. A brief space, and the same crowds that flocked to the cherry turn to the wistaria. Gardens are devoted to the plants, and the populace greatly given to the gardens. There they go to sit and gaze at the grape-like clusters of pale purple flowers that hang more than a cubit long over the wooden trellis, and grow daily down toward their own reflections in the pond beneath, vying with one another in Narcissus-like endeavor. And the people, as they sip their tea on the veranda opposite, behold a doubled delight, the flower itself and its mirrored image stretching to kiss.

After the wistaria comes the tree-peony, and then the iris, with its trefoil flowers broader than a man may span, and of all

colors under the sky. To one who has seen the great Japanese fleur-de-lis, France looks ludicrously infelicitous in her choice of emblem.

But the list grows too long, limited as it is only by its own annual repetition. We have as yet reached but the first week in June; the summer and autumn are still to come, the first bringing the lotus for its crown, and the second the chrysanthemum. And lazily grand the lotus is, itself the embodiment of the spirit of the drowsy August air, the very essence of Buddha-like repose. The castle moats are its special domain, which in this its flowering season it wrests wholly from their more proper occupant — the water. A dense growth of leather-like leaves, above which rise in majestic isolation the solitary flowers, encircles the outer rampart, shutting the castle in as it might be the palace of the Sleeping Beauty. In the delightful dreaminess that creeps over one as he stands thus before some old daimyō's former abode in the heart of Japan, he forgets all his metaphysical difficulties about Nirvana, for he fancies he has found it, one long Lotus afternoon.



A LOTUS POND

1901

And then last, but in some sort first, since it has been taken for the imperial insignia, comes the chrysanthemum. The symmetry of its shape well fits it to symbolize the completeness of perfection which the Mikado, the son of heaven, mundanely represents. It typifies, too, the fullness of the year; for it marks, as it were, the golden wedding of the spring, the reminiscence in November of the nuptials of the May. Its own color, however, is not confined to gold. It may be of almost any hue and within the general limits of a circle of any form. Now it is a chariot wheel with petals for spokes; now a ball of fire with lambent tongues of flame; while another kind seems the button of some natural legion of honor, and still another a pin-wheel in Nature's own day-fireworks.

Admired as a thing of beauty for its own sake, it is also used merely as a material for artistic effects; for among the quaintest of such conceits are the Japanese Jarley chrysanthemum works. Every November in the florists' gardens that share the temple grounds at Asakusa may be seen groups of historical and mythological figures composed entirely of chrysanthemum flowers.

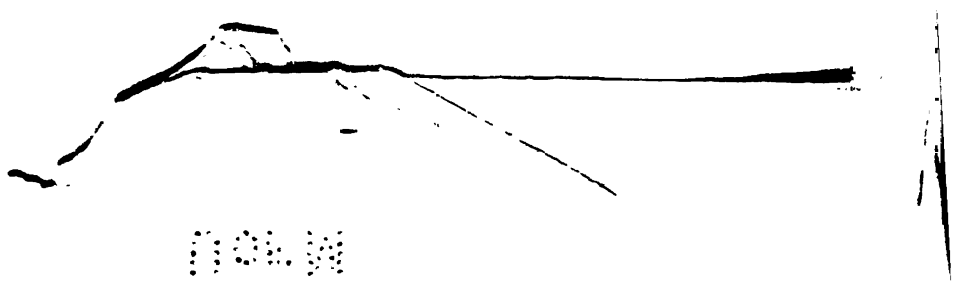
These effigies are quite worthy of comparison with their London cousins, being sufficiently life-like to terrify children and startle anybody. To come suddenly, on turning a corner, upon a colossal warrior, deterrently uncouth and frightfully battle-clad, in the act of dispatching a fallen foe, is a sensation not instantly dispelled by the fact that he is made of flowers. The practice, at least, bears witness to an artistic ingenuity of no mean merit, and to a horticulture ably carried on, if somewhat eccentrically applied.

From the passing of the chrysanthemum dates the dead season. But it is suitably short-lived. Sometimes as early as November, the plum-tree is already blossoming again.

Even from so imperfectly gathered a garland it will be seen that the Japanese do not lack for opportunities to admire, nor do they turn coldly away from what they are given. Indeed, they may be said to live in a chronic state of flower-fever; but in spite of the vast amount of admiration which they bestow on plants, it is not so much the quantity of that admiration as the quality of it which is remarkable. The



FUJI SAN



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intense appreciation shown the subject by the Far Oriental is something whose very character seems strange to us, and when in addition we consider that it permeates the entire people from the commonest coolie to the most æsthetic courtier, it becomes to our comprehension a state of things little short of inexplicable. To call it artistic sensibility is to use too limited a term, for it pervades the entire people; rather is it a sixth sense of a natural, because national description; for the trait differs from our corresponding feeling in degree, and especially in universality enough to merit the distinction. Their care for tree flowers is not confined to a cultivation, it is a cult. It approaches to a sort of natural nature-worship, an adoration in which nothing is personified. For the emotion aroused in the Far Oriental is just as truly an emotion as it was to the Greek; but whereas the Greek personified its object, the Japanese admires that object for what it is. To think of the cherry-tree, for instance, as a woman, would be to his mind a conception transcending even the limits of the ludicrous.

## VI.

### ART.

THAT nature, not man, is their *beau idéal*, the source of inspiration to them, is evident again on looking at their art. The same spirit that makes of them such wonderful landscape gardeners and such wonderful landscape gazers shows itself unmistakably in their paintings.

The current impression that Japanese pictorial ambition, and consequent skill, is confined to the representation of birds and flowers, though entirely erroneous as it stands, has a grain of truth behind it. This idea is due to the attitude of the foreign observers, and was in fact a tribute to Japanese technique rather than an appreciation of Far Eastern artistic feeling. The truth is, the foreigners brought to the subject their own Western criteria of merit, and judged everything by these standards. Such works naturally commended themselves most as had least occasion to de-



THE GENTLE BIRDS

Roll

viate from their canons. The simplest pictures, therefore, were pronounced the best. Paintings of birds and flowers were thus admitted to be fine, because their realism spoke for itself. Of the exquisite poetic feeling of their landscape paintings the foreign critics were not at first conscious, because it was not expressed in terms with which they were familiar.

But first impressions, here as elsewhere, are valuable. One is very apt to turn to them again from the reasoning of his second thoughts. Flora and fauna are a conspicuous feature of Far Asiatic art, because they enter as details of the subject-matter of the artist's thoughts and day-dreams. These birds and flowers are his *sujets de genre*. Where we should select a phase of human life for effective isolation, they choose instead a bit of nature. A spray of grass or a twig of cherry-blossoms is motif enough for them. To their thought its beauty is amply suggestive. For to the Far Oriental all nature is sympathetically sentient. His admiration, instead of being centred on man, embraces the universe. His art reflects it.

Leaving out of consideration, for the

moment, minor though still important distinctions in tone, treatment, and technique, the great fundamental difference between Western and Far Eastern art lies in its attitude toward humanity.

With us, from the time of the Greeks to the present day, man has been the cynosure of artistic eyes; with them he has never been vouchsafed more than a casual, not to say a cursory glance, even woman failing to rivet his attention. One of our own writers has said that, without passing the bounds of due respect, a man is permitted two looks at any woman he may meet, one to recognize, one to admire. A Japanese ordinarily never dreams of taking but one, — if indeed he goes so far as that, — the first. It is the omitting to take that second look that has left him what he is. Not that Fortune has been unpropitious; only blind. Fate has offered him opportunity enough; too much, perhaps. For in Japan the exposure of the female form is without a parallel in latitude. Never nude, it is frequently naked. The result artistically is much the same, though the cause be different. For it is a fatal mistake to suppose the Japanese an immodest people. Ac-

cording to their own standards, they are exceedingly modest. No respectable Japanese woman would, for instance, ever for a moment turn out her toes in walking. It is considered immodest to do so. Their code is, however, not so whimsical as this bit of etiquette might suggest. The intent is with them the touchstone of propriety. In their eyes a state of nature is not a state of indecency. Whatever exposure is required for convenience is right; whatever unnecessary, wrong. Such an Eden-like condition of society would seem to be the very spot for a something like the modern French school of art to have developed in. And yet it is just that study of the nude which has from immemorial antiquity been entirely neglected in the Far East. An ancient Greek, to say nothing of a modern Parisian, would have shocked a Japanese. Yet we are shocked by them. We are astounded at the sights we see in their country villages, while they in their turn marvel at the exhibitions they witness in our city theatres. At their watering-places the two sexes bathe promiscuously together in all the simplicity of nature; but for a Japanese woman to appear on the stage in

any character, however proper, would be deemed indecent. The difference between the two hemispheres may be said to consist in an artless liberty on the one hand, and artistic license on the other. Their unwritten code of propriety on the subject seems to be, "You must see, but you may not observe."

These people live more in accordance with their code of propriety than we do with ours. All classes alike conform to it. The adjective "respectable," used above as a distinction in speaking of woman, was in reality superfluous, for all women there, as far as appearance goes, are respectable. Even the most abandoned creature does not betray her status by her behavior. The reason of this uniformity and its psychological importance I shall discuss later.

This form of modesty, a sort of want of modesty of form, has no connection whatever with sex. It applies with equal force to the male figure, which is even more exposed than the female, and offers anatomical suggestions invaluable alike to the artistic and medical professions, — suggestions that are equally ignored by both. The coolies are frequently possessed of



physiques which would have delighted Michael Angelo; and as for the phenomenal corpulency of the wrestlers, it would have made of the place a very paradise for Rubens. In regard to the doctors, — for to call them surgeons would be to give a name to what does not exist, — a lack of scientific zeal has been the cause of their not investigating what tempts too seductively, we should imagine, to be ignored. Acupuncture, or the practice of sticking long pins into any part of the patient's body that may happen to be paining him, pretty much irrespective of anatomical position, is the nearest approach to surgery of which they are guilty, and proclaims of itself the *in corpore vili* character of the thing operated upon.

Nor does the painter owe anything to science. He represents humanity simply as he sees it in its every-day costume; and it betokens the highest powers of generalized observation that he produces the results he does. In his drawings, man is shown, not as he might look in the primitive, or privitive, simplicity of his ancestral Garden of Eden, but as he does look in the ordinary wear and tear of his present gar-

ments. Civilization has furnished him with clothes, and he prefers, when he has his picture taken, to keep them on.

In dealing with man, the Far Oriental artist is emphatically a realist; it is when he turns to nature that he becomes ideal. But by ideal is not meant here conventional. That term of reproach is a misnomer, founded upon a mistake. His idealism is simply the outcome of his love, which, like all human love, transfigures its object. The Far Oriental has plenty of this, which, if sometimes a delusion, seems also second sight, but it is peculiarly impersonal. His color-blindness to the warm, blood-red end of the spectrum of life in no wise affects his perception of the colder beauty of the great blues and greens of nature. To their poetry he is ever sensitive. His appreciation of them is something phenomenal, and his power of presentation worthy his appreciation.

A Japanese painting is a poem rather than a picture. It portrays an emotion called up by a scene, and not the scene itself in all its elaborate complexity. It undertakes to give only so much of it as is vital to that particular feeling, and inten-



A GLIMPSE OF THE SOUL OF NATURE

24

tionally omits all irrelevant details. It is the expression caught from a glimpse of the soul of nature by the soul of man; the mirror of a mood, passing, perhaps, in fact, but perpetuated thus to fancy. Being an emotion, its intensity is directly proportional to the singleness with which it possesses the thoughts. The Far Oriental fully realizes the power of simplicity. This principle is his fundamental canon of pictorial art. To understand his paintings, it is from this standpoint they must be regarded; not as soulless photographs of scenery, but as poetic presentations of the spirit of the scenes. The very charter of painting depends upon its not giving us charts. And if with us a long poem be a contradiction in terms, a full picture is with them as self-condemnatory a production. From the contemplation of such works of art as we call finished, one is apt, after he has once appreciated Far Eastern taste, to rise with an unpleasant feeling of satiety, as if he has eaten too much at the feast.

Their paintings, by comparison, we call sketches. Is not our would-be slight unwittingly the reverse? Is not a sketch,

after all, fuller of meaning, to one who knows how to read it, than a finished affair, which is very apt to end with itself, barren of fruit? Does not one's own imagination elude one's power to portray it? Is it not forever flitting will-o'-the-wisp-like ahead of us just beyond exact definition? For the soul of art lies in what art can suggest, and nothing is half so suggestive as the half expressed, not even a *double entente*. To hint a great deal by displaying a little is more vital to effect than the cleverest representation of the whole. The art of partially revealing is more telling, even, than the *ars celare artem*. Who has not suspected through a veil a fairer face than veil ever hid? Who has not been delightedly duped by the semi-disclosures of a dress? The principle is just as true in any one branch of art as it is of the attempted developments by one of the suggestions of another. Yet who but has thus felt its force? Who has not had a shock of day-dream desecration on chancing upon an illustrated edition of some book whose story he had lain to heart? Portraits of people, pictures of places, he does not know, and yet which purport to be his! And I venture to be-

lieve that to more than one of us the exquisite pathos of the *Bride of Lammermoor* is gone when Lucia warbles her woes, be it never so entrancingly, to an admiring house. It almost seems as if the garish publicity of using her name for operatic title were a special intervention of the Muse, that we might the less connect song with story, — two sensations that, like two lights, destroy one another by mutual interference.

Against this preference shown the sketch it may be urged that to appreciate such suggestions presupposes as much art in the public as in the painter. But the ability to appreciate a thing when expressed is but half that necessary to express it. Some understanding must exist in the observer for any work to be intelligible. It is only a question of degree. The greater the art-sense in the person addressed, the more had better be left to it. Now in Japan the public is singularly artistic. In fact, the artistic appreciation of the masses there is something astonishing to us, accustomed to our immense intellectual differences between man and man. Sketches are thus peculiarly fitting to such a land.

Besides, there is a quiet modesty about the sketch which is itself taking. To attempt the complete even in a fractional bit of the cosmos, like a picture, has in it a difficulty akin to the logical one of proving a universal negative. The possibilities of failure are enormously increased, and failure is less forgiven for the assumption. Art might perhaps not unwisely follow the example of science in such matters where an exhaustive work, which takes the better part of a lifetime to produce, is invariably entitled by its erudite author an *Elementary Treatise* on the subject in hand.

To aid the effect due to simplicity of conception steps in the Far Oriental's wonderful technique. His brush-strokes are very few in number, but each one tells. They are laid on with a touch which is little short of marvelous, and requires heredity to explain its skill. For in his method there is no emending, no superposition, no change possible. What he does is done once and for all. The force of it grows on you as you gaze. Each stroke expresses surprisingly much, and suggests more. Even omissions are made significant. In his painting it is visibly





THE STORKS

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true that objects can be rendered conspicuous by their very absence. You are quite sure you see what on scrutiny you discover to be only the illusion of inevitable inference. The Far Oriental artist understands the power of suggestion well; for imagination always fills in the picture better than the brush, however perfect be its skill.

Even the neglect of certain general principles which we consider vital to effect, such as the absence of shadows and the lack of perspective, proves not to be of the importance we imagine. We discover in these paintings how immaterial, artistically, was Peter Schlimmel's sad loss, and how perfectly possible it is to make bits of discontinuous distance take the place effectively of continuous space.

Far Eastern pictures are epigrams rather than descriptions. They present a bit of nature with the terseness of a maxim of La Rochefoucault, and they delight as aphorisms do by their insight and the happy conciseness of its expression. Few aphorisms are absolutely true, but their boldness more than makes up for what they lack in verity. So complex a subject is life that to state a truth with all its accom-

panying limitations is to weaken it at once. Exceptions, while demonstrating the rule, do not tend to emphasize it. And though the whole truth is essential to science, such exhaustiveness is by no means a canon of art.

Parallels are not wanting at home. What they do with space in their paintings do we not with time in the case of our comedies, those acted pictures of life? Should we not refuse to tolerate a play that insisted on furnishing us with a full perspective of its characters' past? And yet of the two, it is far preferable, artistically, to be given too much in sequence than too much at once. The Chinese, who put much less into a painting than what we deem indispensable, delight in dramas that last six weeks.

To give a concluding touch of life to my necessarily skeleton-like generalities, memory pictures me a certain painting of Okio's which I fell in love with at first sight. It is of a sunrise on the coast of Japan. A long line of surf is seen tumbling in to you from out a bank of mist, just piercing which shows the blood-red disk of the rising sun, while over the narrow strip of breaking rollers three cranes are slowly



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sailing north. And that is all you see. You do not see the shore; you do not see the main; you are looking but at the border-land of that great unknown, the heaving ocean still slumbering beneath its chilly coverlid of mist, out of which come the breakers, and the sun, and the cranes.

So much for the more serious side of Japanese fancy; a look at the lighter leads to the same conclusion.

Hand in hand with his keen poetic sensibility goes a vivid sense of humor, — two traits that commonly, indeed, are found Maying together over the meadows of imagination. For, as it might be put, —

“The heart that is soonest awake to the flowers  
Is also the first to be touched by the fun.”

The Far Oriental well exemplifies this fact. His art, wherever fun is possible, fairly bubbles over with laughter. From the oldest masters down to Hokusai, it is constantly welling up in the drollest conceits. It is of all descriptions, too. Now it lurks in merry ambush, like the faint suggestion of a smile on an otherwise serious face, so subtle that the observer is left wondering whether the artist could have meant what seems more like one's own ingenious dis-

covery; now it breaks out into the broadest of grins, absurd juxtapositions of singularly happy incongruities. For Hokusai's caricatures and Hendschel's sketches might be twins. If there is a difference, it lies not so much in the artist's work as in the greater generality of its appreciation. Humor flits easily there at the sea-level of the multitude. For the Japanese temperament is ever on the verge of a smile which breaks out with catching naïveté at the first provocation. The language abounds in puns which are not suffered to lie idle, and even poetry often hinges on certain consecrated plays on words. From the very constitution of the people there is of course nothing selfish in the national enjoyment. A man is quite as ready to laugh at his own expense as at his neighbor's, a courtesy which his neighbor cordially returns.

Now the ludicrous is essentially human in its application. The principle of the synthesis of contradictories, popularly known by the name of humor, is necessarily limited in its field to man. For whether it have to do wholly with actions, or partly with the words that express them, whether it be presented in the shape of a pun or a pleas-



antry, it is in incongruous contrasts that its virtue lies. It is the unexpected that provokes the smile. Now no such incongruity exists in nature; man enjoys a monopoly of the power of making himself ridiculous. So pleasant is pleasantry that we do indeed cultivate it beyond its proper pale. But it is only by personifying Nature, and gratuitously attributing to her errors of which she is incapable, that we can make fun of her; as, for instance, when we hold the weather up to ridicule by way of impotent revenge. But satires upon the clown-like character of our climate, which, after the lamest sort of a spring, somehow manages a capital fall, would in the Far East be as out of keeping with fancy as with fact. To a Japanese, who never personifies anything, such innocent irony is unmeaning. Besides, it would be also untrue. For his May carries no suggestion of unfulfilment in its name.

Those Far Eastern paintings which have to do with man fall for the most part under one of two heads, the facetious and the historical. The latter implies no particularly intimate concern for man in himself, for the past has very little personality for

the present. As for the former, its attention is, if anything, derogatory to him, for we are always shy of making fun of what we feel to be too closely a part of ourselves. But impersonality has prevented the Far Oriental from having much *amour propre*. He has no particular aversion to caricaturing himself. Few Europeans, perhaps, would have cared to perpetrate a self-portrait like one painted by the potter Kinsei, which was sold me one day as an amusing *tour de force* by a facetious picture-dealer. It is a composite picture of a new kind, a Japanese variety of type face. The great potter, who was also apparently no mean painter, has combined three aspects of himself in a single representation. At first sight the portrait appears to be simply a full front view of a somewhat moon-faced citizen ; but as you continue to gaze, it suddenly dawns on you that there are two other individuals, one on either side, hobnobbing in profile with the first, the lines of the features being ingeniously made to do double duty ; and when this aspect of the thing has once struck you, you cannot look at the picture without seeing all three citizens simultaneously. The result is doubt-

less more effective as a composition than flattering as a likeness.

Far Eastern sculpture, by its secondary importance among Far Eastern arts, witnesses again to the secondary importance assigned to man at our mental antipodes. In this art, owing to its necessary limitations, the representation of nature in its broader sense is impossible. For in the first place, whatever the subject, it must be such as it is possible to present in one continuous piece; disconnected adjuncts, as, for instance, a flock of birds flying, which might be introduced with great effect in painting, being here practically beyond the artist's reach. Secondly, the material being of uniform appearance, as a rule, color, or even shading, vital points in landscape portrayal, is out of the question, unless the piece were subsequently painted, as in Grecian sculptures, a custom which is not practised in China or Japan. Lastly, another fact fatal to the representation of landscape is the size. The reduced scale of the reproduction suggests falsity at once, a falsity whose belittlement the mind can neither forget nor forgive. Plain sculpture is therefore practically limited to statuary, either

of men or animals. The result is that in their art, where landscape counts for so much, sculpture plays a very minor part. In what little there is, Nature's place is taken by Buddha. For there are two classes of statues, divided the one from the other by that step which separates the sublime from the ridiculous, namely, the colossal and the diminutive. There is no happy human mean. Of the first kind are the beautiful bronze figures of the Buddha, like the Kamakura Buddha, fifty feet high and ninety-seven feet round, in whose face all that is grand and noble lies sleeping, the living representation of Nirvana; and of the second, those odd little ornaments known as *netsuke*, comical carvings for the most part, grotesque figures of men and monkeys, saints and sinners, gods and devils. Appealing bits of ivory, bone, or wood they are, in which the dumb animals are as speaking likenesses as their human fellows.

The other arts show the same motif in their decorations. Pottery and lacquer alike witness the respective positions assigned to the serious and the comic in Far Eastern feeling.

The Far Oriental makes fun of man and makes love to Nature ; and it almost seems as if Nature heard his silent prayer, and smiled upon him in acceptance ; as if the love-light lent her face the added beauty that it lends the maid's. For nowhere in this world, probably, is she lovelier than in Japan : a climate of long, happy means and short extremes, months of spring and months of autumn, with but a few weeks of winter in between ; a land of flowers, where the lotus and the cherry, the plum and wistaria, grow wantonly side by side ; a land where the bamboo embosoms the maple, where the pine at last has found its palm-tree, and the tropic and the temperate zones forget their separate identity in one long self-obliterating kiss.

## VII.

### RELIGION.

IN regard to their religion, nations, like individuals, seem singularly averse to practising what they have preached. Whether it be that his self-constructed idols prove to the maker too suggestive of his own intellectual chisel to deceive him for long, or whether sacred soil, like less hallowed ground, becomes after a time incapable of responding to repeated sowings of the same seed, certain it is that in spiritual matters most peoples have grown out of conceit with their own conceptions. An individual may cling with a certain sentiment to the religion of his mother, but nations have shown anything but a foolish fondness for the sacred superstitions of their great-grandfathers. To the charm of creation succeeds invariably the bitter-sweet after-taste of criticism, and man would not be the progressive animal he is if he long remained in love with his own productions.

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IN LOTUS LAND

1909



What his future will be is too engrossing a subject, and one too deeply shrouded in mystery, not to be constantly pictured anew. No wonder that the consideration of that country toward which mankind is ever being hastened should prove as absorbing to fancy as contemplated earthly journeys proverbially are. Few people but have laid out skeleton tours through its ideal regions, and perhaps, as in the mapping beforehand of merely mundane travels, one element of attraction has always consisted in the possible revision of one's routes.

Besides, there is a fascination about the foreign merely because it is such. Distance lends enchantment to the views of others, and never more so than when those views are religious visions. An enthusiast has certainly a greater chance of being taken for a god among a people who do not know him intimately as a man. So with his doctrines. The imported is apt to seem more important than the home-made; as the far-off bewitches more easily than the near. But just as castles in the air do not commonly become the property of their builders, so mansions in the skies almost as frequently have failed of direct inher-

itance. Rather strikingly has this proved the case with what are to-day the two most powerful religions of the world, — Buddhism and Christianity. Neither is now the belief of its founder's people. What was Aryan-born has become Turanian-bred, and what was Semitic by conception is at present Aryan by adoption. The possibilities of another's hereafter look so much rosier than the limitations of one's own present!

Few pastimes are more delightful than tossing pebbles into some still, dark pool, and watching the ripples that rise responsive, as they run in ever widening circles to the shore. Most of us have felt its fascination second only to that of the dotted spiral of the skipping-stone, a fascination not outgrown with years. There is something singularly attractive in the subtle force that for a moment sways each particle only to pass on to the next, a motion mysterious in its immateriality. Some such pleasure must be theirs who have thrown their thoughts into the hearts of men, and seen them spread in waves of feeling, whose sphere time widens through the world. For like the mobile water is the mind of man, — quick to catch emo-



MEDITATION

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tions, quick to transmit them. Of all waves of feeling, this is not the least true of religious ones, that, starting from their birth-place, pass out to stir others, who have but humanity in common with those who professed them first. Like the ripples in the pool, they leave their initial converts to sink back again into comparative quiescence, as they advance to throw into sudden tremors hordes of outer barbarians. In both of the great religions in question this wave propagation has been most marked, only the direction it took differed. Christianity went westward; Buddhism travelled east. Proselytes in Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy find counterparts in Eastern India, Burmah, and Thibet. Eventually the taught surpassed their teachers both in zeal and numbers. Jerusalem and Benares at last gave place to Rome and Lassa as sacerdotal centres. Still the movement journeyed on. Popes and Lhamas remained where their predecessors had founded sees, but the tide of belief surged past them in its irresistible advance. Farther yet from where each faith began are to be found to-day the greater part of its adherents. The home that the Western hemisphere

seems to promise to the one, the extreme Orient affords the other. As Roman Catholicism now looks to America for its strength, so Buddhism to-day finds its worshippers chiefly in China and Japan.

But though the Japanese may be said to be all Buddhists, Buddhist is by no means all that they are. At the time of their adoption of the great Indian faith, the Japanese were already in possession of a system of superstition which has held its own to this day. In fact, as the state religion of the land, it has just experienced a revival, a regalanizing of its old-time energy, at the hands of some of the native archæologists. Its sacred mirror, held up to Nature, has been burnished anew. Formerly this body of belief was the national faith, the Mikado, the direct descendant of the early gods, being its head on earth. His reinstatement to temporal power formed a very fitting first step toward reinvesting the cult with its former prestige; a curious instance, indeed, of a religious revival due to archæological, not to religious zeal.

This cult is the mythological inheritance of the whole eastern seaboard of Asia, from Siam to Kamtchatka. In Japan it is called



SHINTŌ PILGRIMS

1170



**Shintoism.** The word "Shinto" means literally "the way of the gods," and the letter of its name is a true exponent of the spirit of the belief. For its scriptures are rather an itinerary of the gods' lives than a guide to that road by which man himself may attain to immortality. Thus with a certain fitness pilgrimages are its most noticeable rites. One cannot journey anywhere in the heart of Japan without meeting multitudes of these pilgrims, with their neat white leggings and their mushroom-like hats, nor rest at night at any inn that is not hung with countless little banners of the pilgrim associations, of which they all are members. Being a pilgrim there is equivalent to being a tourist here, only that to the excitement of doing the country is added a sustaining sense of the meritoriousness of the deed. Oftener than not the objective point of the devout is the summit of some noted mountain. For peaks are peculiarly sacred spots in the Shinto faith. The fact is perhaps an expression of man's instinctive desire to rise, as if the bodily act in some wise betokened the mental action. The shrine in so exalted a position is of the simplest: a rude

hut, with or without the only distinctive emblems of the cult, a mirror typical of the god and the pendent *gohei*, or zigzag strips of paper, permanent votive offerings of man. As for the belief itself, it is but the deification of those natural elements which aboriginal man instinctively wonders at or fears, the sun, the moon, the thunder, the lightning, and the wind; all, in short, that he sees, hears, and feels, yet cannot comprehend. He clothes his terrors with forms which resemble the human, because he can conceive of nothing else that could cause the unexpected. But the awful shapes he conjures up have naught in common with himself. They are far too fearful to be followed. Their way is the "highway of the gods," but no Jacob's ladder for wayward man.

In this externality to the human lies the reason that Shintoism and Buddhism can agree so well, and can both join with Confucianism in helping to form that happy family of faith which is so singular a feature of Far Eastern religious capability. It is not simply that the two contrive to live peaceably together; they are actually both of them implicitly believed by the same

individual. Millions of Japanese are good Buddhists and good Shintoists at the same time. That such a combination should be possible is due to the essential difference in the character of the two beliefs. The one is extrinsic, the other intrinsic, in its relations to the human soul. Shintoism tells man but little about himself and his hereafter; Buddhism, little but about himself and what he may become. In examining Far Eastern religion, therefore, for personality, or the reverse, we may dismiss Shintoism as having no particular bearing upon the subject. The only effect it has is indirect in furthering the natural propensity of these people to an adoration of nature.

In Korea and in China, again, Confucianism is the great moral law, as by reflection it is to a certain extent in Japan. But that in its turn may be omitted in the present argument, inasmuch as Confucius taught confessedly and designedly only a system of morals, and religiously abstained from pronouncing any opinion whatever upon the character or the career of the human soul.

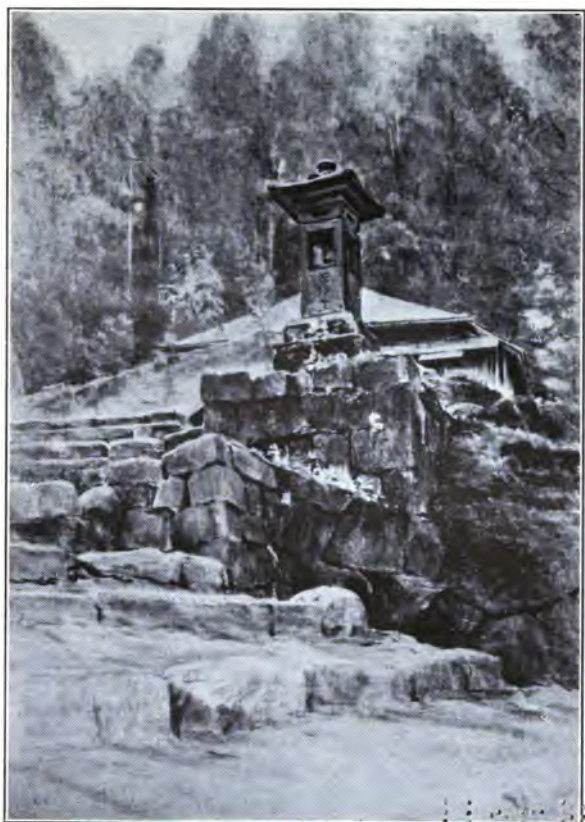
Taouism, the third great religion of China, resembles Shintoism to this extent,

that it is a body of superstition, and not a form of philosophy. It undertakes to provide nostrums for spiritual ills, but is dumb as to the constitution of the soul for which it professes to prescribe. Its pills are to be swallowed unquestioningly by the patient, and are warranted to cure; and owing to the two great human frailties, fear and credulity, its practice is very large. Possessing, however, no philosophic diploma, it is without the pale of the present discussion.

The demon-worship of Korea is a mild form of the same thing with the hierarchy left out, every man there being his own spiritual adviser. An ordinary Korean is born with an innate belief in malevolent spirits, whom he accordingly propitiates from time to time. One of nobler birth propitiates only the spirits of his own ancestors.

We come, then, by a process of elimination to a consideration of Buddhism, the great philosophic faith of the whole Far East.

Not uncommonly in the courtyard of a Japanese temple, in the solemn half-light of the sombre firs, there stands a large stone basin, cut from a single block, and filled to the brim with water. The trees,



A STONE LANTERN

And

the basin, and a few stone lanterns — so called from their form, and not their function, for they have votive pebbles where we should look for wicks — are the sole occupants of the place. Sheltered from the wind, withdrawn from sound, and only piously approached by man, this antechamber of the god seems the very abode of silence and rest. It might be Nirvana itself, human entrance to an immortality like the god's within, so peaceful, so pervasive is its calm; and in its midst is the moss-covered monolith, holding in its embrace the little imprisoned pool of water. So still is the spot and so clear the liquid that you know the one only as the reflection of the other. Mirrored in its glassy surface appears everything around it. As you peer in, far down you see a tiny bit of sky, as deep as the blue is high above, across which slowly sail the passing clouds; then nearer stand the trees, arching overhead, as if bending to catch glimpses of themselves in that other world below; and then, nearer yet — yourself.

Emblem of the spirit of man is this little pool to Far Oriental eyes. Subtile as the soul is the incomprehensible water; so re-

sponsive to light that it remains itself invisible ; so clear that it seems illusion ! Though portrayer so perfect of forms about it, all we know of the thing itself is that it is. Through none of the five senses do we perceive it. Neither sight, nor hearing, nor taste, nor smell, nor touch can tell us it exists ; we feel it to be by the muscular sense alone, that blind and dumb analogue for the body of what consciousness is for the soul. Only when disturbed, troubled, does the water itself become visible, and then it is but the surface that we see. So to the Far Oriental this still little lake typifies the soul, the eventual purification of his own ; a something lost in reflection, self-effaced, only the *alter ego* of the outer world.

For contemplation, not action, is the Far Oriental's ideal of life. The repose of self-adjustment like that to which our whole solar system is slowly tending as its death, — this to him appears, though from no scientific deduction, the end of all existence. So he sits and ponders, abstractly, vaguely, upon everything in general, — synonym, alas, to man's finite mind, for nothing in particular, — till even the sense of self seems to vanish, and through the mistlike



portal of unconsciousness he floats out into the vast indistinguishable sameness of Nirvana's sea.

At first sight Buddhism is much more like Christianity than those of us who stay at home and speculate upon it commonly appreciate. As a system of philosophy it sounds exceedingly foreign, but it looks unexpectedly familiar as a faith. Indeed, the one religion might well pass for the counterfeit presentment of the other. The resemblance so struck the early Catholic missionaries that they felt obliged to explain the remarkable similarity between the two. With them ingenuous surprise instantly begot ingenious sophistry. Externally, the likeness was so exact that at first they could not bring themselves to believe that the Buddhist ceremonials had not been filched bodily from the practices of the true faith. Finding, however, that no known human agency had acted in the matter, they bethought them of introducing, to account for things, a *deus ex machina* in the shape of the devil. They were so pleased with this solution of the difficulty that they imparted it at once with much pride to the natives. You have indeed got,

they graciously if somewhat gratuitously informed them, the outward semblance of the true faith, but you are in fact the miserable victims of an impious fraud. Satan has stolen the insignia of divinity, and is now masquerading before you as the deity; your god is really our devil, — a recognition of antipodal inversion truly worthy the Jesuitical mind!

Perhaps it is not matter for great surprise that they converted but few of their hearers. The suggestion was hardly so diplomatic as might have been expected from so generally astute a body; for it could not make much difference what the all-presiding deity was called, if his actions were the same, since his motives were beyond human observation. Besides, the bare idea of a foreign bogus was not very terrifying. The Chinese possessed too many familiar devils of their own. But there was another and a much deeper reason, which we shall come to later, why Christianity made but little headway in the Far East.

But it is by no means in externals only that the two religions are alike. If the first glance at them awakens that peculiar sensation which most of us have felt at

some time or other, a sense of having seen all this before, further scrutiny reveals a deeper agreement than merely in appearances.

In passing from the surface into the substance, it may be mentioned incidentally that the codes of morality of the two are about on a level. I say incidentally, for so far as its practice, certainly, is concerned, if not its preaching, morality has no more intimate connection with religion than it has with art or politics. If we doubt this, we have but to examine the facts. Are the most religious peoples the most moral? It needs no prolonged investigation to convince us that they are not. If proof of the want of a bond were required, the matter of truth-telling might be adduced in point. As this is a subject upon which a slight misconception exists in the minds of some evangelically persuaded persons, and because, what is more generally relevant, the presence of this quality, honesty in word and deed, has more than almost any other one characteristic helped to put us in the van of the world's advance to-day, it may not unfittingly be cited here.

The argument in the case may be put

thus. Have specially religious races been proportionally truth-telling ones? If not, has there been any other cause at work in the development of mankind tending to increase veracity? The answer to the first question has all the simplicity of a plain negative. No such pleasing concomitance of characteristics is observable to-day, or has been presented in the past. Permitting, however, the dead past to bury its shortcomings in oblivion, let us look at the world as we find it. We observe, then, that the religious spirit is quite as strong in Asia as it is in Europe; if anything, that at the present time it is rather stronger. The average Brahman, Mahometan, or Buddhist is quite as devout as the ordinary Roman Catholic or Presbyterian. If he is somewhat less given to propagandism, he is not a whit less regardful of his own salvation. Yet throughout the Orient truth is a thing unknown, lies of courtesy being *de rigueur* and lies of convenience *de raison*; while with us, fortunately, mendacity is generally discredited. But we need not travel so far for proof. The same is evident in less antipodal relations. Have the least religious nations of Europe been any less

truthful than the most bigoted? Was fanatic Spain remarkable for veracity? Was Loyola a gentleman whose assertions carried conviction other than to the stake? Were the eminently mundane burghers whom he persecuted noted for a pious superiority to fact? Or, to narrow the field still further, and scan the circle of one's own acquaintance, are the most believing individuals among them worthy of the most belief? Assuredly not.

We come, then, to the second point. Has there been any influence at work to differentiate us in this respect from Far Orientals? There has. Two separate causes, in fact, have conduced to the same result. The one is the development of physical science; the other, the extension of trade. The sole object of science being to discover truth, truth-telling is a necessity of its existence. Professionally, scientists are obliged to be truthful. *Aliter* of a Jesuit.

So long as science was of the closet, its influence upon mankind generally was indirect and slight; but so soon as it proceeded to stalk into the street and earn its own living, its veracious character began to

tell. When out of its theories sprang inventions and discoveries that revolutionized every-day affairs and changed the very face of things, society insensibly caught its spirit. Man awoke to the inestimable value of exactness. From scientists proper, the spirit filtered down through every stratum of education, till to-day the average man is born exact to a degree which his forefathers never dreamed of becoming. To-day, as a rule, the more intelligent the individual, the more truthful he is, because the more innately exact in thought, and thence in word and action. With us, to lie is a sign of a want of cleverness, not of an excess of it.

The second cause, the extension of trade, has inculcated the same regard for veracity through the pocket. For with the increase of business transactions in both time and space, the telling of the truth has become a financial necessity. Without it, trade would come to a standstill at once. Our whole mercantile system, a modern piece of mechanism unknown to the East till we imported it thither, turns on an implicit belief in the word of one's neighbor. Our legal safeguards would snap like red tape were the great bond of mutual trust once

broken. Western civilization has to be truthful, or perish.

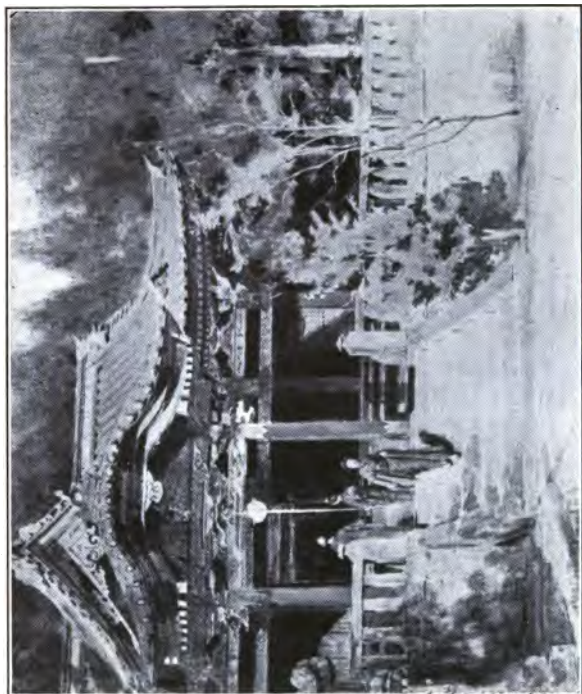
And now for the spirits of the two beliefs.

The soul of any religion realizes in one respect the Brahman idea of the individual soul of man, namely, that it exists much after the manner of an onion, in many concentric envelopes. Man, they tell us, is composed not of a single body simply, but of several layers of body, each shell as it were respectively inclosing another. The outermost is the merely material body, of which we are so directly cognizant. This encases a second, more spiritual, but yet not wholly free from earthly affinities. This contains another, still more refined; till finally, inside of all is that immaterial something which they conceive to constitute the soul. This eventual residuum exemplifies the Franciscan notion of pure substance, for it is a thing delightfully devoid of any attributes whatever.

We may, perhaps, not be aware of the existence of such an elaborate set of encasings to our own heart of hearts, nor of a something so very indefinite within, but the most casual glance at any religion will re-

veal its truth as regards the soul of a belief. We recognize the fact outwardly in the buildings erected to celebrate its worship. Not among the Jews alone was the holy of holies kept veiled, to temper the divine radiance to man's benighted understanding. Nor is the chancel-rail of Christianity the sole survivor of the more exclusive barriers of olden times, even in the Western world. In the Far East, where difficulty of access is deemed indispensable to dignity, the material approaches are still manifold and imposing. Court within court, building after building, isolate the shrine itself from the profane familiarity of the passers-by. But though the material encasings vary in number and in exclusiveness, according to the temperament of the particular race concerned, the mental envelopes exist, and must exist, in both hemispheres alike, so long as society resembles the crust of the earth on which it dwells, — a crust composed of strata that grow denser as one descends. What is clear to those on top seems obscure to those below; what are weighty arguments to the second have no force at all upon the first. There must necessarily be grades of elevation in individual





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beliefs, suited to the needs and cravings of each individual soul. A creed that fills the shallow with satisfaction leaves but an aching void in the deep. It is not of the slightest consequence how the belief starts; differentiated it is bound to become. The higher minds alone can rest content with abstract imaginings; the lower must have concrete realities on which to pin their faith. With them, inevitably, ideals degenerate into idols. In all religions this unavoidable debasement has taken place. The Roman Catholic who prays to a wooden image of Christ is not one whit less idolatrous than the Buddhist who worships a bronze statue of Amida Butzu. All that the common people are capable of seeing is the soul-envelope, for the soul itself they are unable to appreciate. Spiritually they are undiscerning, because imaginatively they are blind.

Now the grosser soul-envelopes of the two great European and Asiatic faiths, though differing in detail, are in general parallel in structure. Each boasts its full complement of saints, whose congruent catalogues are equally wearisome in length. Each tells its circle of beads to help it

keep count of similarly endless prayers. For in both, in the popular estimation, quantity is more effective to salvation than quality. In both the believer practically pictures his heaven for himself, while in each his hell, with a vividness that does like credit to its religious imagination, is painted for him by those of the cult who are themselves confident of escaping it. Into the lap of each mother church the pious believer drops his little votive offering with the same affectionate zeal, and in Asia, as in Europe, the mites of the many make the might of the mass.

But behind all this is the religion of the few,—of those to whom sensuous forms cannot suffice to represent super-sensuous cravings; whose god is something more than an anthropomorphic creation; to whom worship means not the cramping of the body, but the expansion of the soul.

The rays of the truth, like the rays of the sun, which universally seems to have been man's first adoration, have two properties equally inherent in their essence, warmth and light. And as for the life of all things on this globe both attributes of sunshine are necessary, so to the develop-

ment of that something which constitutes the ego both qualities of the truth are vital. We sometimes speak of character as if it were a thing wholly apart from mind ; but, in fact, the two things are so interwoven that to perceive the right course is the strongest possible of incentives to pursue it. In the end the two are one. Now, while clearness of head is all-important, kindness of heart is none the less so. The first, perhaps, is more needed in our communings with ourselves, the second in our commerce with others. For, dark and dense bodies that we are, we can radiate affection much more effectively than we can reflect views.

That Christianity is a religion of love needs no mention ; that Buddhism is equally such is perhaps not so generally appreciated. But just as the gospel of the disciple who loved and was loved the most begins its story by telling us of the Light that came into the world, so none the less surely could the Light of Asia but be also its warmth. Half of the teachings of Buddhism are spent in inculcating charity. Not only to men is man enjoined to show kindness, but to all other animals as well. The people practise what their scriptures

preach. The effect indirectly on the condition of the brutes is almost as marked as its more direct effect on the character of mankind. In heart, at least, Buddhism and Christianity are very close.

But here the two paths to a something beyond an earthly life diverge. Up to this point the two religions are alike, but from this point on they are so utterly unlike that the very similarity of all that went before only suffices to make of the second the weird, life-counterfeiting shadow of the first. As in a silhouette, externally the contours are all there, but within is one vast blank. In relation to one's neighbor the two beliefs are kin, but as regards one's self, as far apart as the West is from the East. For here, at this idea of self, we are suddenly aware of standing on the brink of a fathomless abyss, gazing giddily down into that great gulf which divides Buddhism from Christianity. We cannot see the bottom. It is a separation more profound than death; it seems to necessitate annihilation. To cross it we must bury in its depths all we know as ourselves.

Christianity is a personal religion; Buddhism, an impersonal one. In this funda-

mental difference lies the world-wide opposition of the two beliefs. Christianity tells us to purify ourselves that we may enjoy countless æons of that bettered self hereafter ; Buddhism would have us purify ourselves that we may lose all sense of self for evermore.

For all that it preaches the essential vileness of the natural man, Christianity is a gospel of optimism. While it affirms that at present you are bad, it also affirms that this depravity is no intrinsic part of yourself. It unquestioningly asserts that it is something foreign to your true being. It even believes that in a more or less spiritual manner your very body will survive. It essentially clings to the ego. What it inculcates is really present endeavor sanctioned by the prospect of future bliss. It tacitly takes for granted the desirability of personal existence, and promises the certainty of personal immortality, — a terror to evil-doers, and a sustaining sense of coming unalloyed happiness to the good. Through and through its teachings runs the feeling of the fullness of life, that desire which will not die, that wish of the soul which beats its wings against its earthly casement

in its longing for expansion beyond the narrow confines of threescore years and ten.

Buddhism, on the contrary, is the *cri du cœur* of pessimism. This life, it says, is but a chain of sorrows. To multiply days is only to multiply evil. These desires that urge us on are really cause of all our woe. We think they are ourselves. We are mistaken. They are all illusion, and we are victims of a mirage. This personality, this sense of self, is a cruel deception and a snare. Realize once the true soul behind it, devoid of attributes, therefore without this capacity for suffering, an indivisible part of the great impersonal soul of nature: then, and then only, will you have found happiness in the blissful quiescence of Nirvana.

With a certain poetic fitness, misery and impersonality were both present in the occasion that gave the belief birth. Many have turned to the consolations of religion by reason of their own wretchedness; Gautama sought its help touched by the woes of others whom, in his own happy life journey, he chanced one day to come across. Shocked by the sight of human



disease, old age, and death, sad facts to which hitherto he had been sedulously kept a stranger, he renounced the world that he might find for it an escape from its ills. But bliss, as he conceived it, lay not in wanting to be something he was not, but in actual want of being. His quest for mankind was immunity from suffering, not the active enjoyment of life. In this negative way of looking at happiness, he acted in strict conformity with the spirit of his world. For the doctrine of pessimism had already been preached. It underlay the whole Brahman philosophy, and everybody believed it implicitly. Already the East looked at this life as an evil, and had affirmed for the individual spirit extinction to be happier than existence. The wish for an end to the ego, the hope to be eventually nothing, Gautama accepted for a truism as undeniably as the Brahmins did. What he pronounced false was the Brahman prospectus of the way to reach this desirable impersonal state. Their road, he said, could not possibly land the traveller where it professed, since it began wrong, and ended nowhere. The way, he asserted, is within a man. He has but to realize the

truth, and from that moment he will see his goal and the road that leads there. There is no panacea for human ills, of external application. The Brahman homœopathic treatment of sin is folly. The slaughtering of men and bulls cannot possibly bring life to the soul. To mortify the body for the sins of the flesh is palpably futile, for in desire alone lies all the ill. Quench the desire, and the deeds will die of inanition. Man himself is sole cause of his own misery. Get rid, then, said the Buddha, of these passions, these strivings for the sake of self, that hold the true soul a prisoner. They have to do with things which we know are transitory: how can they be immortal themselves? We recognize them as subject to our will; they are, then, not the I.

As a man, he taught, becomes conscious that he himself is something distinct from his body, so, if he reflect and ponder, he will come to see that in like manner his appetites, ambitions, hopes, are really extrinsic to the spirit proper. Neither heart nor head is truly the man, for he is conscious of something that stands behind both. Behind desire, behind even the will,

lies the soul, the same for all men, one with the soul of the universe. When he has once realized this eternal truth, the man has entered Nirvana. For Nirvana is not an absorption of the individual soul into the soul of all things, since the one has always been a part of the other. Still less is it utter annihilation. It is simply the recognition of the eternal oneness of the two, back through an everlasting past on through an everlasting future.

Such is the belief which the Japanese adopted, and which they profess to day. Such to them is to be the dawn of death's to-morrow; a blessed impersonal immortality, in which all sense of self, illusion that it is, shall itself have ceased to be; a long dreamless sleep, a beatified rest, which no awakening shall ever disturb.

Among such a people personal Christianity converts but few. They accept our material civilization, but they reject our creeds. To preach a prolongation of life appears to them like preaching an extension of sorrow. At most, Christianity succeeds only in making them doubters of what lies beyond this life. But though professing agnosticism while they live, they turn,

when the shadows of death's night come on, to the bosom of that faith which teaches that, whatever may have been one's earthly share of happiness, " 't is something better not to be."

Strange it seems at first that those who have looked so long to the rising sun for inspiration should be they who live only in a sort of lethargy of life, while those who for so many centuries have turned their faces steadily to the fading glory of the sunset should be the ones who have embodied the spirit of progress of the world. Perhaps the light, by its very rising, checks the desire to pursue; in its setting it lures one on to follow.

Though this religion of impersonality is not their child, it is their choice. They embraced it with the rest that India taught them, centuries ago. But though just as eager to learn of us now as of India then, Christianity fails to commend itself. This is not due to the fact that the Buddhist missionaries came by invitation, and ours do not. Nor is it due to any want of personal character in these latter, but simply to an excess of it in their doctrines.

For to-day the Far East is even more im-



A JAPANESE GOD

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personal in its religion than are those from whom that religion originally came. India has returned again to its worship of Brahma, which, though impersonal enough, is less so than is the gospel of Gautama. For it is passively instead of actively impersonal.

Buddhism bears to Brahmanism something like the relation that Protestantism does to Roman Catholicism. Both bishops and Brahmans undertake to save all who shall blindly commit themselves to professional guidance, while Buddhists and Protestants alike believe that a man's salvation must be brought about by the action of the man himself. The result is, that in the matter of individuality the two reformed beliefs are further apart than those against which they severally protested. For by the change the personal became more personal, and the impersonal more impersonal than before. The Protestant, from having tamely allowed himself to be led, began to take a lively interest in his own self-improvement; while the Buddhist, from a former apathetic acquiescence in the doctrine of the universally illusive, set to work energetically towards self-extinction. Curi-

ous labor for a mind, that of devoting all its strength to the thinking itself out of existence! Not content with being born impersonal, a Far Oriental is constantly striving to make himself more so.

We have seen, then, how in trying to understand these peoples we are brought face to face with impersonality in each of those three expressions of the human soul, speech, thought, yearning. We have looked at them first from a social standpoint. We have seen how singularly little regard is paid the individual from his birth to his death. How he lives his life long the slave of patriarchal customs of so puerile a tendency as to be practically impossible to a people really grown up. How he practises a wholesale system of adoption sufficient of itself to destroy any surviving regard for the ego his other relations might have left. How in his daily life he gives the minimum of thought to the bettering himself in any worldly sense, and the maximum of polite consideration to his neighbor. How, in short, he acts toward himself as much as possible as if he were another, and to that other as if he were himself.

Then, not content with standing stranger



like upon the threshold, we have sought to see the soul of their civilization in its intrinsic manifestations. We have pushed our inquiry, as it were, one step nearer its home. And the same trait that was apparent sociologically has been exposed in this our antipodal phase of psychical research. We have seen how impersonal is his language, the principal medium of communication between one soul and another; how impersonal are the communings of his soul with itself. How the man turns to nature instead of to his fellowman in silent sympathy. And how, when he speculates upon his coming castles in the air, his most roseate desire is to be but an indistinguishable particle of the sunset clouds and vanish invisible as they into the starry stillness of all-embracing space.

Now what does this strange impersonality betoken? Why are these peoples so different from us in this most fundamental of considerations to any people, the consideration of themselves? The answer leads to some interesting conclusions.

## VIII.

### IMAGINATION.

IF, as is the case with the moon, the earth, as she travelled round her orbit turned always the same face inward, we might expect to find, between the thoughts of that hemisphere which looked continually to the sun, and those of the other peering eternally out at the stars, some such difference as actually exists between ourselves and our longitudinal antipodes. For our conception of the cosmos is of a sunlit world throbbing with life, while their Nirvana finds not unfit expression in the still, cold, fathomless awe of the midnight sky. That we cannot thus directly account for the difference in local coloring serves but to make that difference of more human interest. The dissimilarity between the Western and the Far Eastern attitude of mind has in it something beyond the effect of environment. For it points to the importance of the part which the principle

of individuality plays in the great drama daily enacting before our eyes, and which we know as evolution. It shows, as I shall hope to prove, that individuality bears the same relation to the development of mind that the differentiation of species does to the evolution of organic life: *that the degree of individualization of a people is the self-recorded measure of its place in the great march of mind.*

All life, whether organic or inorganic, consists, as we know, in a change from a state of simple homogeneity to one of complex heterogeneity. The process is apparently the same in a nebula or a brachiopod, although much more intricate in the latter. The immediate force which works this change, the life principle of things, is, in the case of organic beings, a subtle something which we call spontaneous variation. What this mysterious impulse may be is beyond our present powers of recognition. As yet, the ultimates of all things lie hidden in the womb of the vast unknown. But just as in the case of a man we can tell what organs are vital, though we are ignorant what the vital spark may be, so in our great cosmical laws we can say in

what their power resides, though we know not really what they are. Whether mind be but a sublimated form of matter, or, what amounts to the same thing, matter a menial kind of mind, or whether, which seems less likely, it be a something incomparable with substance, of one thing we are sure, the same laws of heredity govern both. In each a like chain of continuity leads from the present to the dim past, a connecting clue which we can follow backward in imagination. Now what spontaneous variation is to the material organism, imagination, apparently, is to the mental one. Just as spontaneous variation is constantly pushing the animal or the plant to push out, as a vine its tendrils, in all directions, while natural conditions are as constantly exercising over it a sort of unconscious pruning power, so imagination is ever at work urging man's mind out and on, while the sentiment of the community, commonly called common sense, which simply means the point already reached by the average, is as steadily tending to keep it at its own level. The environment helps, in the one case as in the other, to the shaping of the development. Purely physical in the first,

it is both physical and psychical in the second, the two reacting on each other. But in either case it is only a constraining condition, not the divine impulse itself. Precisely, then, as in the organism, this subtle spirit checked in one direction finds a way to advance in another, and produces in consequence among an originally similar set of bodies a gradual separation into species which grow wider with time, so in brain evolution a like force for like reasons tends inevitably to an ever-increasing individualization.

Now what evidence have we that this analogy holds? Let us look at the facts, first as they present themselves subjectively.

The instinct of self-preservation, that guardian angel so persistent to appear when needed, owes its summons to another instinct no less strong, which we may call the instinct of individuality; for with the same innate tenacity with which we severally cling to life do we hold to the idea of our own identity. It is not for the philosophic desire of preserving a very small fraction of humanity at large that we take such pains to avoid destruction; it is

that we insensibly regard death as threatening to the continuance of the ego, in spite of the theories of a future life which we have so elaborately developed. Indeed, the psychical shrinking is really the quintessence of the physical fear. We cleave to the abstract idea closer even than to its concrete embodiment. Sooner would we forego this earthly existence than surrender that something we know as self. For sufficient cause we can imagine courting death; we cannot conceive of so much as exchanging our individuality for another's, still less of abandoning it altogether; for gradually a man, as he grows older, comes to regard his body as, after all, separable from himself. It is the soul's covering, rendered indispensable by the climatic conditions of our present existence, one without which we could no longer continue to live here. To forego it does not necessarily negative, so far as we yet know, the possibility of living elsewhere. Some more congenial tropic may be the wandering spirit's fate. But to part with the sense of self seems to be like taking an eternal farewell of the soul. The Western mind shrinks before the bare idea of such a thought.



THE JUDAS TREE

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The clinging to one's own identity, then, is now an instinct, whatever it may originally have been. It is a something we inherited from our ancestors and which we shall transmit more or less modified to our descendants. How far back this consciousness has been felt passes the possibilities of history to determine, since the recording of it necessarily followed the fact. All we know is that its mention is coeval with chronicle, and its origin lost in allegory. The Bible, one of the oldest written records in the world, begins with a bit of mythology of a very significant kind. When the Jews undertook to trace back their family tree to an idyllic garden of Eden, they mentioned as growing there beside the tree of life, another tree called the tree of knowledge. Of what character this knowledge was is inferable from the sudden self-consciousness that followed the partaking of it. So that if we please we may attribute directly to Eve's indiscretion the many evils of our morbid self-consciousness of the present day. But without indulging in unchivalrous reflections we may draw certain morals from it of both immediate and ultimate applicability.

## 142 THE MIND OF THE FAR EAST

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THE JUDAS TREE

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compatible with a very small amount of imagination. On the one side we may instance painting. Now painting begins its career in the humble capacity of copyist, a pretty poor copyist at that. At first so slight was its skill that the rudest symbols sufficed. "This is a man" was conventionally implied by a few scratches bearing a very distant relationship to the real thing. Gradually, owing to human vanity and a growing taste, pictures improved. Combinations were tried, a bit from one place with a piece from another; a sort of mosaic requiring but a slight amount of imagination. Not that imagination of a higher order has not been called into play, although even now pictures are often happy adaptations rather than creations proper. Some masters have been imaginative; others, unfortunately for themselves and still more for the public, have not. For that the art may attain a high degree of excellence for itself and much distinction for its professors, without calling in the aid of imagination, is evident enough on this side of the globe, without travelling to the other.

Take, on the other hand, a branch of science which, to the average layman,

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Now what evidence have we that this analogy holds? Let us look at the facts, first as they present themselves subjectively.

The instinct of self-preservation, that guardian angel so persistent to appear when needed, owes its summons to another instinct no less strong, which we may call the instinct of individuality; for with the same innate tenacity with which we severally cling to life do we hold to the idea of our own identity. It is not for the philosophic desire of preserving a very small fraction of humanity at large that we take such pains to avoid destruction; it is

that we insensibly regard death as threatening to the continuance of the ego, in spite of the theories of a future life which we have so elaborately developed. Indeed, the psychical shrinking is really the quintessence of the physical fear. We cleave to the abstract idea closer even than to its concrete embodiment. Sooner would we forego this earthly existence than surrender that something we know as self. For sufficient cause we can imagine courting death; we cannot conceive of so much as exchanging our individuality for another's, still less of abandoning it altogether; for gradually a man, as he grows older, comes to regard his body as, after all, separable from himself. It is the soul's covering, rendered indispensable by the climatic conditions of our present existence, one without which we could no longer continue to live here. To forego it does not necessarily negative, so far as we yet know, the possibility of living elsewhere. Some more congenial tropic may be the wandering spirit's fate. But to part with the sense of self seems to be like taking an eternal farewell of the soul. The Western mind shrinks before the bare idea of such a thought.



THE JUDAS TREE

point. Their utter ignorance of science shows this, and paradoxical as it may seem, their art, in spite of its merit and its universality, does the same. That art and imagination are necessarily bound together receives no very forcible confirmation from a land where, nationally speaking, at any rate, the first is easily first and the last easily last, as nations go. It is to quite another quality that their artistic excellence must be ascribed. That the Chinese and later the Japanese have accomplished results at which the rest of the world will yet live to marvel, is due to their — taste. But taste or delicacy of perception has absolutely nothing to do with imagination. That certain of the senses of Far Orientals are wonderfully keen, as also those parts of the brain that directly respond to them, is beyond question; but such sensitiveness does not in the least involve the less earth-tied portions of the intellect. A peculiar responsiveness to natural beauty, a sort of mental agreement with its earthly environment, is a marked feature of the Japanese mind. But appreciation, however intimate, is a very different thing from originality. The one is commonly the handmaid of the other, but

the other by no means always accompanies the one.

So much for the cause; now for the effect which we might expect to find if our diagnosis be correct.

If the evolving force be less active in one race than in another, three relative results should follow. In the first place, the race in question will at any given moment be less advanced than its fellow; secondly, its rate of progress will be less rapid; and lastly, its individual members will all be nearer together, just as a stream, in falling from a cliff, starts one compact mass, then gradually increasing in speed, divides into drops, which, growing finer and finer and farther and farther apart, descend at last as spray. All three of these consequences are visible in the career of the Far Eastern peoples. The first result scarcely needs to be proved to us, who are only too ready to believe it without proof. It is, nevertheless, a fact. Viewed unprejudicedly, their civilization is not so advanced a one as our own. Although they are certainly our superiors in some very desirable particulars, their whole scheme is distinctly more aboriginal fundamentally. It is more finished,

as far as it goes, but it does not go so far. Less rude, it is more rudimentary. Indeed, as we have seen, its surface-perfection really shows that nature has given less thought to its substance. One may say of it that it is the adult form of a lower type of mind-specification.

The second effect is scarcely less patent. How slow their progress has been, if for centuries now it can be called progress at all, is world-known. Chinese conservatism has passed into a proverb. The pendulum of pulsation in the Middle Kingdom long since came to a stop at the medial point of rest. Centre of civilization, as they call themselves, one would imagine that their mind-machinery had got caught on their own dead centre, and now could not be made to move. Life, which elsewhere is a condition of unstable equilibrium, there is of a fatally stable kind. For the Chinaman's disinclination to progress is something more than *vis inertiae*; it has become an ardent devotion to the *status quo*. Jostled, he at once settles back to his previous condition again; much as more materially, after a lifetime spent in California, at his death his body is punctiliously embalmed

and sent home across five thousand miles of sea for burial. With the Japanese the condition of affairs is somewhat different. Their tendency to stand still is of a purely passive kind. It is a state of neutral equilibrium, stationary of itself but perfectly responsive to an impulse from without. Left to their own devices, they are conservative enough, but they instantly copy a more advanced civilization the moment they get a chance. This proclivity on their part is not out of keeping with our theory. On the contrary, it is precisely what was to have been expected; for we see the very same apparent contradiction in characters we are thrown with every day. Imitation is the natural substitute for originality. The less strong a man's personality the more prone is he to adopt the ideas of others, on the same principle that a void more easily admits a foreign body than does space that is already occupied; or as a blank piece of paper takes a dye more brilliantly for not being already tinted itself.

The third result, the remarkable homogeneity of the people, is not, perhaps, so universally appreciated, but it is equally evident on inspection, and no less weighty

in proof. Indeed, the Far Eastern state of things is a kind of charade on the word; for humanity there is singularly uniform. The distance between the extremes of mind-development in Japan is much less than with us. This lack of divergence exists not simply in certain lines of thought, but in all those characteristics by which man is parted from the brutes. In reasoning power, in artistic sensibility, in delicacy of perception, it is the same story. If this were simply the impression at first sight, no deductions could be drawn from it, for an impression of racial similarity invariably marks the first stage of acquaintance of one people by another. Even in outward appearance it is so. We find it at first impossible to tell the Japanese apart; they find it equally impossible to differentiate us. But the present resemblance is not a matter of first impressions. The fact is patent historically. The men whom Japan reveres are much less removed from the common herd than is the case in any Western land. And this has been so from the earliest times. Shakspeares and Newtons have never existed there. Japanese humanity is not the soil to grow them. The com-



parative absence of genius is fully paralleled by the want of its opposite. Not only are the paths of preëminence untrodden; the purlieus of brutish ignorance are likewise unfrequented. On neither side of the great medial line is the departure of individuals far or frequent. All men there are more alike; — so much alike, indeed, that the place would seem to offer a sort of forlorn hope for disappointed socialists. Although religious missionaries have not met with any marked success among the natives, this less deserving class of enthusiastic disseminators of an all-possessing belief might do well to attempt it. They would find there a very virgin field of a most promisingly dead level. It is true, human opposition would undoubtedly prevent their tilling it, but Nature, at least, would not present quite such constitutional obstacles as she wisely does with us.

The individual's mind is, as it were, an isolated bit of the race mind. The same set of traits will be found in each. Mental characteristics there are a sort of common property, of which a certain undifferentiated portion is indiscriminately allotted to every man at birth. One soul resembles

another so much, that in view of the patriarchal system under which they all exist, there seems to the stranger a peculiar appropriateness in so strong a family likeness of mind. An idea of how little one man's brain differs from his neighbor's may be gathered from the fact, that while a common coolie in Japan spends his spare time in playing a chess twice as complicated as ours, the most advanced philosopher is still on the blissfully ignorant side of the *pons asinorum*.

We find, then, that in all three points the Far East fulfils what our theory demanded.

There is one more consideration worthy of notice. We said that the environment had not been the *deus ex materia* in the matter; but that the soul itself possessed the germ of its own evolution. This fact does not, however, preclude another, that the environment has helped in the process. Change of scene is beneficial to others besides invalids. How stimulating to growth a different habitat can prove, when at all favorable, is perhaps sufficiently shown in the case of the marguerite, which, as an emigrant called white-weed, has usurped

our fields. The same has been no less true of peoples. Now these Far Eastern peoples, in comparison with our own forefathers, have travelled very little. A race in its travels gains two things: first it acquires directly a great deal from both places and peoples that it meets, and secondly it is constantly put to its own resources in its struggle for existence, and becomes more personal as the outcome of such strife. The changed conditions, the hostile forces it finds, necessitate mental ingenuity to adapt them and influence it unconsciously. To see how potent these influences prove we have but to look at the two great branches of the Aryan family, the one that for so long now has stayed at home, and the one that went abroad. Destitute of stimulus from without, the Indo-Aryan mind turned upon itself and consumed in dreamy metaphysics the imagination which has made its cousins the leaders in the world's progress to-day. The inevitable numbness of monotony crept over the stay-at-homes. The deadly sameness of their surroundings produced its unavoidable effect. The torpor of the East, like some paralyzing poison, stole into their souls, and they fell into a drowsy slumber

only to dream in the land they had formerly wrested from its possessors. Their birthright passed with their cousins into the West.

In the case of the Altaic races which we are considering, cause and effect mutually strengthened each other. That they did not travel more is due primarily to a lack of enterprise consequent upon a lack of imagination, and then their want of travel told upon their imagination. They were also unfortunate in their journeying. Their travels were prematurely brought to an end by that vast geographical Nirvana the Pacific Ocean, the great peaceful sea as they call it themselves. That they would have journeyed further is shown by the way their dreams went eastward still. They themselves could not for the preventing ocean, and the lapping of its waters proved a nation's lullaby.

One thing, I think, then, our glance at Far Eastern civilization has more than suggested. The soul, in its progress through the world, tends inevitably to individualization. Yet the more we perceive of the cosmos the more do we recognize an all-pervading unity in it. Its soul must be one,



A HANGING BRIDGE

Mr. Tol

not many. The divine power that made all things is not itself multifold. How to reconcile the ever-increasing divergence with an eventual similarity is a problem at present transcending our generalizations. What we know would seem to be opposed to what we must infer. But perception of how we shall merge the personal in the universal, though at present hidden from sight, may sometime come to us, and the seemingly irreconcilable will then turn out to involve no contradiction at all. For this much is certain: grand as is the great conception of Buddhism, majestic as is the idea of the stately rest it would lead us to, the road here below is not one the life of the world can follow. If earthly existence be an evil, then Buddhism will help us ignore it; but if by an impulse we cannot explain we instinctively crave activity of mind, then the great gospel of Gautama touches us not; for to abandon self — egoism, that is, not selfishness — is the true vacuum which nature abhors. As for Far Orientals, they themselves furnish proof against themselves. That impersonality is not man's earthly goal they unwittingly bear witness; for they are not of those who will survive. Artistic attrac-

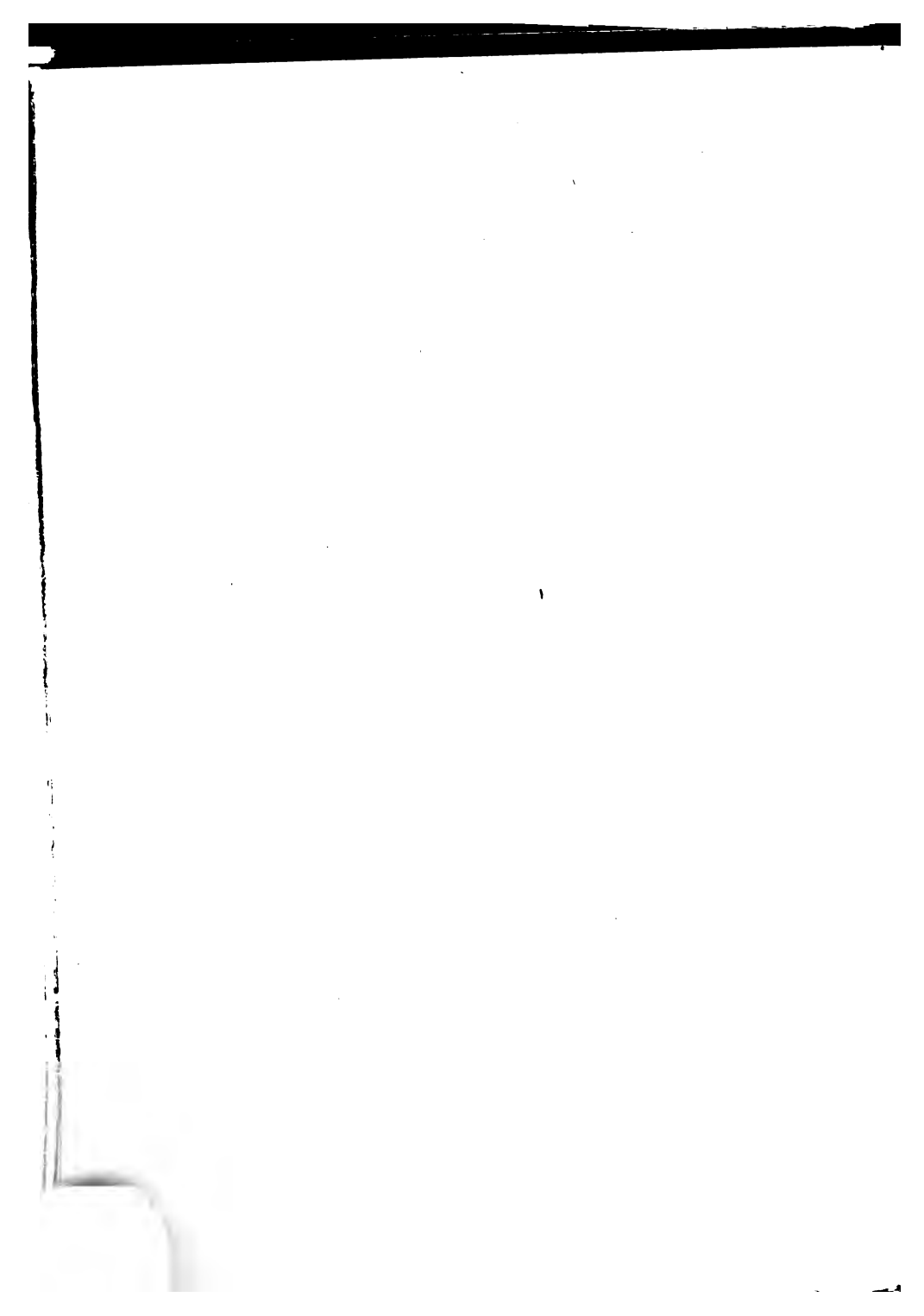
tive people that they are, their civilization is like their own tree flowers, beautiful blossoms destined never to bear fruit; for whatever we may conceive the far future of another life to be, the immediate effect of impersonality cannot but be annihilating. If these people continue in their old course, their earthly career is closed. Just as surely as morning passes into afternoon, so surely are these races of the Far East, if unchanged, destined to disappear before the advancing nations of the West. Vanish they will off the face of the earth and leave our planet the eventual possession of the dwellers where the day declines. Unless their newly imported ideas really take root, it is from this whole world that Japanese and Koreans, as well as Chinese, will inevitably be excluded. Their Nirvana is already being realized; already it has wrapped Far Eastern Asia in its winding-sheet, the shroud of those whose day was but a dawn, as if in prophetic keeping with the names they gave their homes,—the Land of the Day's Beginning, and the Land of the Morning Calm.

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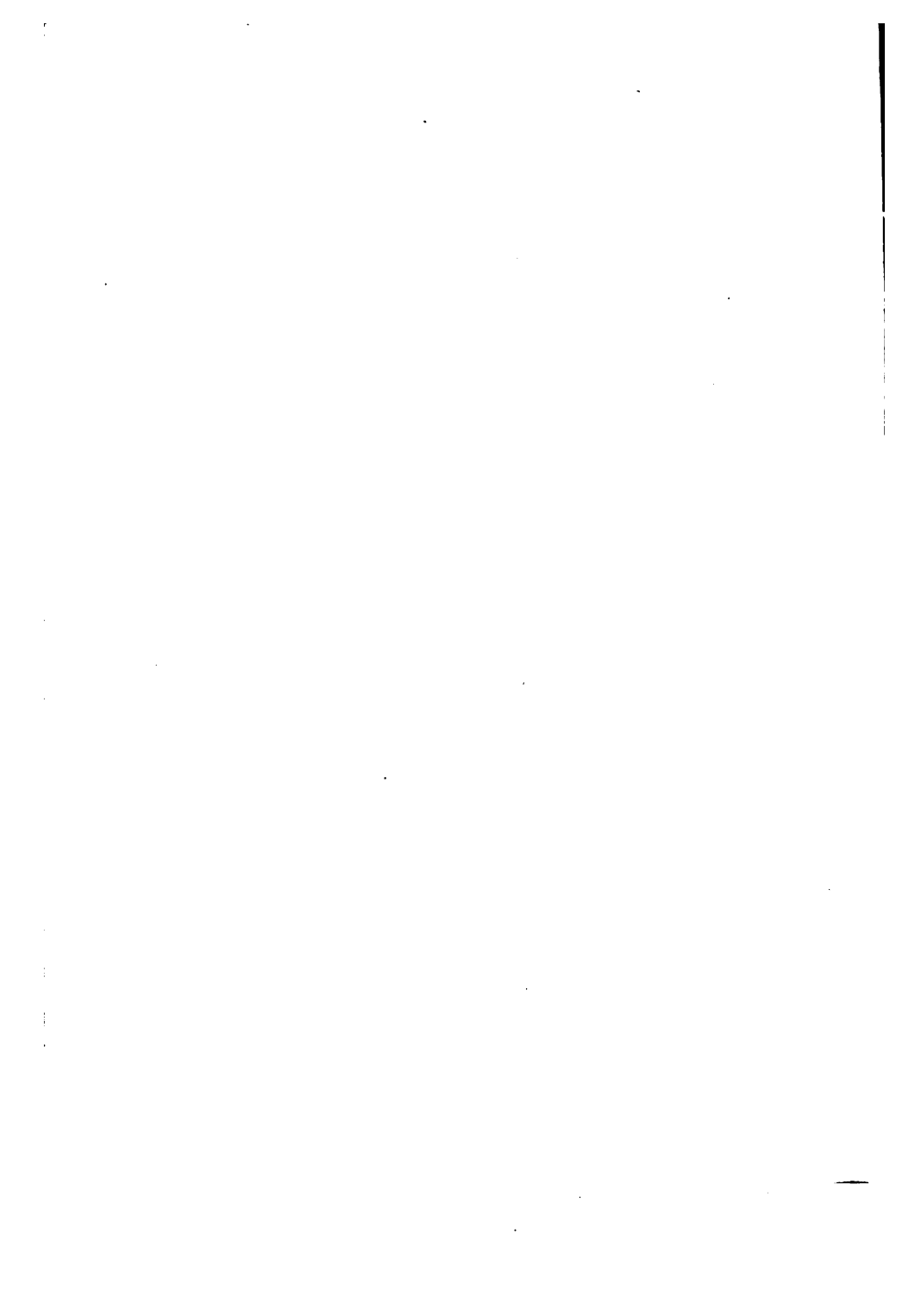
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